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ABSTRACT

The booklet presents 15 articles describing innovative social studies materials and teaching techniques. It was designed to help classroom teachers develop and implement social studies programs at the elementary school level. The materials were developed by teachers in education programs at the University of North Dakota from 1968-77. The first article presents a directory of commercial organizations which offer elementary school curriculum materials on legal and moral education, community development, and humanistic education. The second article suggests techniques to help children develop awareness of themselves and other people, and lists books which emphasize diversity in human development. Several articles describe the use of familiar resources (newspapers, telephones, money, parents, and other adults) in the classroom. Three articles discuss methods of teaching basic economic concepts to children. One article offers suggestions for bringing politics into the classroom dring and after national elections. Other articles deal with moral and career education for elementary school students. Learning activities include simulations, mapping and graphing activities, reading assignments, writing experiences, art work, and field trips. (Author/DB)

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SOCIAL STUDIES

Compiled by
Clara A. Pederson

Center for Teaching and Learning
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, North Dakota 58202
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Introduction

Teacher education programs within the University of North Dakota have devoted, over the past eight years, considerable human and fiscal resources to assisting teachers develop more open, responsive classrooms. Associated with these efforts has been the development of a large array of materials which have been used in workshops, in interactions with individual teachers and in newsletters. While some of the materials have been published in a variety of professional journals, most have remained in mimeographed form and used in selected North Dakota settings or in the Follow Through sites. Unfortunately, many of these unpublished materials have been "used-up" and copies no longer exist except in the desks or files of one or more of the many teachers with whom we have worked. Rather than see more of these valuable resources lost we have made a decision to pull together for publication some of what we still have available. The materials are being published under the following titles: Philosophical Formulations: An Introduction; Parents and Schools; Social Studies; Math; Science; Creative Drama; Music; Movement and Playground; Reading and Language Arts; Evaluation and Record Keeping.

Everything that we have is not included as we did not want the booklets to become too large for practical use. In addition, much of what we have was prepared originally for a very specific purpose in a specific classroom setting and does not seem appropriate for a more general compilation of materials. The materials selected for inclusion are those which Clara Pederson felt had a particularly high potential for contributing to the work of a classroom teacher.

Another reason for the decision to publish this series of booklets relates to the changing conditions occurring within the Follow Through Program. We anticipate the role of the Follow Through Sponsors (we are one of twenty-two) to change rather substantially during the next year and a half. We expect that school districts participating in the future in Follow Through will be encouraged to make decisions about a specific program direction but will not have available an active sponsor able to provide large numbers of staff to help them implement the educational direction selected. While we do not believe that these booklets will be sufficient in themselves for a school district, a particular school within a district, or a particular group of teachers within a school to implement our particular approach to education, we do feel that such materials can help provide an integral part of our process of assisting schools that wish to adopt a more open, responsive, educational program.

It should be noted that the materials have not been edited to any large degree or redeveloped for this set of booklets inasmuch as they had a freshness when they were first used that we wish to retain. In closing this introductory statement, I wish to acknowledge the dedication which Clara Pederson, Coordinator of our Follow Through Program, has brought to the task of compiling these materials. She has provided a significant service to the Center, its Follow Through Program and the many teachers and schools who will use the booklets.

Vito Perrone
Dean, Center
for Teaching and
Learning

Social Studies

Clara A. Pederson — University of North Dakota

Since Social Studies is concerned with people, it can and should be integrated into other areas of the curriculum. The thematic approach can be used very effectively. The themes "Myself" and "Play" lend themselves well to a study of what children already know and from here concepts can be broadened and extended. The ways in which children interact with each other, plan and resolve problems are integral to the Social Studies at the primary level. So, too, is the child's relationship to the community, its physical and human resources. We encourage considerable use of the community and its resources as a major element in the Social Studies.

Even though most of the materials and experiences in Social Studies will be developed around the lives of children in the classroom, there are commercial materials that may prove helpful. A few of these materials include:

1. Developing Understanding of Self and Others

   a. Level D-1-Social-Self Ages 5-7
   b. Level D-2-Social-Self Ages 6-8

   Designed to help children grow socially and emotionally. The kit includes: A comprehensive manual, recorded and illustrated story lessons, puppet, role playing and music activities, exciting stimulus pictures, family and character hand puppets, colorful posters, puppet play props.

   American Guidance Service, Inc.
   Publishers' Building
   Circle Pines, MN 55014

2. Law Related Education Materials

   Law Related Education is a K-12 program sponsored jointly by educators and people in the legal profession. It attempts to give students an understanding of specific laws, the process of developing laws and an opportunity, through a variety of experiences, to consider the moral and ethical issues related to the law.

   Special Committee on Youth
   Education for Citizenship
   American Bar Association
   1155 East 60th Street
   Chicago, Illinois 60637

3. Moral Education

   A number of interesting curriculum experiences in Moral Education have been developed for younger children. Reprints of journal articles and information dealing with the topic may be obtained from:

   The National Council for the
   Social Studies
   1201 - 16th Street N.W.
   Washington, D.C. 70036

4. The Human Development Program

   Group discussion ideas for children K-6 led by the teacher, e.g., Magic Circle ideas -

Pre-school -	Level A
Kindergarten -	Level B
First Grade -	Level 1
Second Grade -	Level 2
Third Grade -	Level 3
Fourth Grade -	Level 4

Fifth Grade - Level 5
Sixth Grade - Level 6

Human Development Training
Institute
7574 University Avenue
LaMeda, California 92041

5. Yellow Pages of Learning Resources

Provides many excellent ideas for expanding classroom activities into the community.

MIT Press
28 Carleton Street
Cambridge, MA 02142

Notes from a Social Studies Meeting with Vito Perrone

Marlene McCracken — University of North Dakota

Dr. Perrone's definition of Social Studies has several components:

1) Social Studies as Communication
2) Social Studies as Human Development
3) Social Studies as Understanding Others

Social Studies is a non-separated activity. To separate it is to make it less useful. A rich program of communication is your best setting. Social interaction is, all on its own, a very good Social Studies program--as is a program which focuses on others in the classroom, community, regional area. A traditional approach is too removed from the level of young children.

Teacher Modeling

The modeling that teachers do with children is an extremely important area in Social Studies. For the teacher, politeness, courtesy, and respect are extremely useful tools.

We need to do more in the areas of self-awareness and self-evaluation.

Teachers should share with children as much of themselves as they possibly can. We ask children to share much of themselves. Do we bring objects to share? Do we share ideas on favorite things, our feelings, what makes us happy or angry? It's quite natural at times, to be sad, happy or angry. Help children to know this - encourage it. But don't let it become an excuse.

These notes were compiled from a meeting with Vito Perrone and the Follow Through teachers at the Washington Triad, March 1973.

Children need the opportunity to address themselves to questions about themselves; e.g. significant expressions about "feeling."

I look upon an emotional response as Social Studies - a sense of sharing, an awareness of others.

Giving and sharing is basic to human interaction.

We need to help children increase their levels of self-awareness; help them to express themselves. In order to do this children must know:

1) that you as a teacher will encourage them; and
2) that you are not going to make a judgment on what they have done, said or written.

We must move away from judgments if we expect to expand children's thinking, willingness to experiment, to risk. We must move away from written judgmental remarks in their journals, e.g. "That's very good. This is good work." Such comments are of limited use. Rather, we need to comment directly on the content or ask or write questions to extend the content. Let children know you have read their materials thoroughly and thoughtfully.

Activities

1) Cut pictures out of magazines. Make "A Happy Book," "A Sad Book," etc. Have children write stories to match pictures after much oral communication stemming from questions such as, "How is she feeling?" "Why?"

2) Have children make "Family Albums." Have children draw pictures of their families.

   Discuss and write about:
   1) the kinds of things they can do to help other members of their families.
   2) the kinds of things the other members do to help them.

3) Help children to assume responsibility for themselves, their belongings, their classroom and the organization of that classroom.

4) Use mapping and graphing activities as depicted in Nuffield Math and Project Math. These are good activities for children to see their own physical growth and the growth of people and places around them.

5) Develop an awareness of others and a sense of what it means to be of service to others, e.g., find out who is in hospitals - have children paint pictures or write letters to them.

There is a large emphasis now on looking at diversity in human development. We've moved beyond the melting pot. In the process of the melting pot, we've lost a lot of the richness of people's lives. How do we capitalize on the various cultural backgrounds in this part of the country? How do we show similarities and differences?

Can we bring more people into our classroom setting to tell about their lives? Can we create this rich classroom setting, giving children so much more to read, write and talk about?

Can we look at similarities and differences in shapes and structures?
- Bring in Community Helpers
- Bring in people from varying cultures

Use books to develop Human Awareness:

1) Bowmar Publishers - Teacher's Guide to Bill Martin's Freedom Books

2) Bowmar Publishers - Early Childhood Education Series
   Friends, Friends, Friends
   Father is Big

3) "Happiness is Reading" Series, Leswing Publishers - Almost Just Alike

4) Prentice Hall, And I Must Hurry For The Sea Is Coming In - by George Mendoza

Role Playing is a good method of placing one person in another's shoes - teaching awareness of others.

History should be dealt with locally; e.g., the history of Sedro Woolley, Ferndale, Burlington. Histories of families, houses, plots of land, etc.

Using the Newspaper in Teaching Social Studies in the Intermediate Grades

Audrey Knoll

The primary purpose for using the newspaper in teaching social studies is to create a more realistic understanding of the problems which exist in American life and in the larger world through habitual reading. Children can become familiar with various aspects of the international, national and local scene through reading the newspaper. They can learn about similarities and differences among people and about the diverse views expressed by various people on major social issues. Their concept of distance is sharpened by pinpointing the major events, thus increasing knowledge of geography. Places involved in the news take on new meaning and adult conversation at home becomes related. Becoming aware of the fact that people and situations change, children gain a greater understanding of their present community and the world. Much of the content and skills in the regular instructional program is strengthened. As a result, children recognize the importance of continuity in newspaper reading and develop efficient methods for doing so. Each child should be given the opportunity of selecting for emphasis those developments of special personal interest. These varied topics greatly enrich daily activities and current events discussions. The process of open discussion of controversial subjects is a fundamental principle in a democratic way of life.

From "The Use of the Daily Newspaper as a Classroom Supplement in Grades Four and Five." From an Independent Study completed in August 1970, pp. 49-55. Audrey Knoll was a Master's degree candidate at the time this paper was written.

The newspaper as a recorder of day by day history presents current developments in society in a usable form. In contrast to audio-visual media, the newspaper serves as a literary and pictorial record of current trends and accomplishments. In addition, the newspaper presents facts, allowing its readers to analyze, interpret and draw their own conclusions.

Suggested activities for using the newspaper in the area of social studies are:

1. Scrapbook on Social Studies - The process of assembling, organizing and indexing clippings and pictures for a scrapbook is an education in itself, requiring many skills. Every scrapbook should be built around a single or several closely related themes. Students should be encouraged to write brief compositions on sketches, designs and diagrams filed in their scrapbooks. Have children prepare a table of contents, preface and index. Encourage each to design his own cover and file in the library for reference. Topics will vary according to interest of students. Some suggested themes are:

   a. Cancer Research Findings Today.
   b. Congress at Work.
   c. Governmental Personnel.
   d. Rural Life.
   e. Urban Life.
   f. Editorial Cartoons.
   g. Pollution in Our Cities.
   h. World Affairs.
   i. Strikes and Demonstrations.

j. Segregation.
k. Crime.

2. Picture Storybook - Pictures compiled for units of work are important substitutes for actual experience. Those showing human activity in a natural setting are most valuable. Children should learn to seek facts and draw inferences concerning life styles of people, climate, natural features, topography, natural resources, communication and transportation. These inferences may be checked for accuracy with reference books and maps.

3. Wall Frieze - Collect news items and illustrations depicting an epoch in American life and assemble according to the sequence of events. Entitle the frieze with a caption as "The World's News in Pictures." Change the friezes periodically and file in a reference library.

4. News Diary - Each class member daily writes an abbreviated account of major events, giving the date, place, nature of the activity and associated personalities.

5. Current Events Box - During the week, each child places a news item in a box labeled "On The Scene." At the end of the week, every child draws one item. The topic drawn becomes the subject of an oral report and informal class discussion the next week. This activity leads students into new interest areas.

6. Guessing Game - Pupils initiate the game by saying "I am thinking of a man who . . .," finishing the statement with an achievement of a prominent news figure. The child identifying the person becomes leader and the game starts over.

7. Headlines - Gather a large number of news items, detaching the headlines. Divide the class into 4 or 5 groups and have them read the article and write a headline. Compare it to the original.

8. Editorial Cartoon - Each child chooses a cartoon, studying the major theme and giving the interpretation to the class. For an interesting variation, have the students draw cartoons to news items.

9. Current Events Party - For a final class review in social studies, have children choose one major current event of the year, studying it for the purpose of dramatization. Use the newspaper clippings and pictures for reviewing the costumes authentically.

10. "I See by the Papers" - Students pretend to be attending an informal men or women's club social meeting. Converse informally by saying, "I see by the papers that. . . ." Students can create interesting sidelights by predicting development of events.

11. Weekly Broadcasts - Construct a model television with a cardboard box. Divide the class into groups of 5 or 6, and schedule each group for a review of the news for a week. Each group chooses a leader to give the broadcast on the program, "Time Marches On." It would possibly be a good idea for a teacher to check the script for accuracy and diction. If permissible the students could possibly present the entire broadcast over the PA system to the entire school.

12. Newspaper Dioramas - Construct frame dioramas of persons in the news contributing to politics, literature, entertainment, science or social studies.

13. Advertisement Map - Clip products advertised and locate, on a world map, places from which the raw materials came. Places where products are manufactured can also be located this way.

14. Newspaper Maps - Cut out and file newspaper maps of countries or boundary lines between countries for future reference in social studies work.

15. Yesteryears - Compose a monthly calendar scrapbook dedicating one page for each day, dating them consecutively. Use the feature article describing what happened on this same date internationally, nationally and locally in the past.

16. Choose Your City - Use the portion of the weather section in the newspaper which lists the temperatures of major cities in the United States. Have each child choose one city, find the state in which the city is located and the geographical location on the globe. Have children record temperatures and explain climate trends.

17. Newspaper Relief Maps - Scraps of newsprint can be used to make relief maps. When the pulp is soaked and mixed with sizing, it sticks to wood or cardboard. It can then be molded, painted and labeled to resemble natural features; such as, rivers, mountains, hills and valleys. Procedure: Tear paper in one-inch square bits, placing them into a container. Pour over this a gallon of boiling water, soaking for five hours. Drain excess water and mash with a stick until fine, smooth pulp is produced. Mold with fingers into different landforms and paint. A variation would be to construct maps of states or countries.

18. Invite a newspaper editor to talk to the class about his job, editing the news and how the newspaper strives to serve the community.

19. Visit a library or museum and view microfilms or original newspapers from the 19th century.

The activities outlined above were designed to give vitality to a child's learning and to encourage the child in habits of newspaper reading and current discussion that will be useful long after he has left school. This activity brings together the learning child in school with the social experience of his community and of humanity elsewhere. It correlates what the child is learning in school with what he is talking about at home and on the street. The habit of reading the newspaper teaches the child how to find continuing instruction, entertainment and pleasure in what is certain to be of value in his/her adult world.

People, Places, Things — Using Your Community In Your Classroom

Peter Madden

Regardless of educational philosophy, teachers who attempt to lessen their dependence on stultifying pencil-and-paper student tasks face a common problem finding alternative classroom materials to replace the traditional avalanche of paper. Teachers seeking alternative sources of materials can move in one of two directions. You may be able to purchase the high-priced, sleekly packaged educational materials that are constantly being developed and offered to schools which can afford such luxuries.

If, however, you cannot make large investments in supplemental materials, you do not have to forego the development of exciting, multidimensional classrooms. Instead, I suggest that you merely have to look more closely at the wealth of materials available free or quite inexpensively in your own community. Not only will the cost of locally-obtained materials be far lower than items purchased on the educational market, but the usefulness of this material, in terms of the needs and interests of your particular group of students, may actually be much higher than you expected.

The ideas in this paper came from a variety of sources. Most important among these are the teachers of North Dakota who shared their experiences with me during the past year. In addition, a number of other writers have begun to offer suggestions on the educational use of locally-obtained materials. Those publications which seem particularly useful are listed in the annotated bibliography found at the close of the paper.

One logical way to consider the use of community resources in the classroom is to divide the discussion into three parts: things or materials, people and places. Since integration of learning activities is a primary goal in modern classrooms, there is bound to be some overlap between these divisions. However, each will be treated more-or-less separately in the beginning.

Things

The sources of useful classroom materials are legion. The first and easiest place to look is within the homes of your own students. Broken or castoff equipment of all kinds tends to collect in cupboards, closets and garages until the annual "spring cleaning." Given periodic encouragement and reminders, your children can bring this invaluable material into the classroom instead of watching it be thrown away.

Among the items we collected last year were lawn mower engines, television sets, clocks, watches, tape recorders, phonographs, can openers, mixers, rugs, chairs and lamps.

A related source, but one which involves a small amount of money, is the ever-popular garage and rummage sale or auction. For one dollar or less, I have obtained a variety of operating toys and games, an easy chair, a working gasoline engine, a rug, a lamp, several yards of printed

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From Insights, October 1972, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 2-15. Peter Madden was an instructor in the New School when this article was written.

cloth and many similar items. Other garage sale and auction fans I know have stocked their classrooms with operable autoharps, pianos, clay kilns, lumber, motors, animal cages, typewriters, office business machines and furniture--all at prices which were fractions of their original cost.

Local businessmen will also contribute a number of useful items to your classroom supply. With businessmen there is one key rule to remember: don't become a pest or parasite. I make it a rule never to take anything from a business which is not true "junk." If the material has any value at all, I ask the donor to reconsider. As long as no financial consideration is involved, businessmen will generally be happy to keep you stocked continually with new junk as it appears. I ask each cooperating businessman to keep a box on hand with my name and telephone number. Then I go around every few weeks to collect whatever has turned up.

Naturally, this procedure is most effective with businesses where I am a regular customer. However, I have been able to collect two van loads of classroom junk in a few hours from businessmen in town where I was a total stranger. You can simplify the process of spreading the news about your junk collecting to local businesses by working through the local Chamber of Commerce. Most Chambers have a monthly newsletter in which you can ask for discarded materials and give a telephone where you might be reached.

The newsletter offers you an attractive vehicle to repay your benefactors as well. It is often quite reinforcing to businessmen to provide them with some private and public appreciation of their contribution to your classroom. A note of thanks sent directly to the contributor from time to time is always helpful. Public recognition in the form of a short article in the local Chamber newsletter or town newspaper will not only reward your business friends for the contribution but will enhance the status of such alternative activities in your classroom with a significant sector of the community.

One of the most interesting sources of material is the federal government. Voluminous printed material is available free or at nominal cost through the Government Printing Office in Washington, D.C. 20402. By contacting the Superintendent of Documents at that address you can obtain a current catalog of government publications and be placed on a mailing list for all future catalogs.

The biggest problem with federal publications is just finding out what is available from the vast output in virtually every department and agency in the government. Examples of what can be found range from the annual yearbook of the Department of Agriculture, which is generally a magnificently illustrated scientific document related to land and ecology, to a handy programmed text on basic computers put out by the Army's Quartermaster Corps. The Weather Bureau, now known as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, will provide you with national weather maps, books of satellite photographs and maps, and some interpretive materials on the use of scientific tools for weather forecasting.

Military Surplus

Physical material is also available from a number of government sources. Military bases offer a staggering variety of surplus supplies. Schools have obtained trucks and cars, parachutes, electronic equipment, desks, files, living room furniture, bottles of rare gases, laboratory and shop equipment...the list of what local military bases can offer is virtually endless.

As usual with the government, getting your hands on surplus material involves some fairly complex paperwork and procedures--at least the first time around. The government requires

that schools obtain a certificate of eligibility which is usually issued by the state. Then surplus material can be "screened" (meaning looked at), tagged if desired and picked up after a period of time if nobody else wants it. There are certain priorities governing who gets what material, but public and tax-exempt schools rank fairly high on the list.

In North Dakota, as in all other states, the state government has simplified the procedure considerably by drawing federal material on its own and storing it in a state warehouse for schools. The claiming procedure is much easier and does not generally require teachers to wait for the material they have selected. (In North Dakota, information can be obtained from the Director of Surplus Property, Department of Public Instruction, State Capitol, Bismarck, N.D. 58501.)

At the County Level

At the local level, several state, county and federal agencies provide integrated facilities to offer conservation and agricultural services. Most of these agencies operate through the county government system. The county agricultural agent and home demonstration agent offer a wide variety of publications and audio-visual aids. Some of these documents are too specialized or technical for general classroom use, but the rest, especially those dealing with ecology, wildlife, plants and personal finance, are quite appropriate for students at the elementary level.

Of unique interest in making community studies are the topographic maps produced by the Geological Survey of the U.S. Department of the Interior. These extremely detailed maps cover nearly all areas of a state in very small sections of about 60 square miles--roughly one average school district per map. Each map costs 50 cents and may be obtained from Washington, D.C., after finding the proper title from the Geological Survey's Index to Topographical Maps for each state. This index may be obtained free from Washington or viewed in a good local library.

In a similar vein, aerial photographs of a number of local agricultural areas of the United States may be procured from the local office of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) which is also associated with the county government. A related agency, the Soil Conservation Service, will supply you with a number of useful pamphlets and can also offer you trees and shrubs at no cost in the spring of the year.

Several schools have become involved in landscaping projects on school property or nearby publically-owned areas. In each case this activity resulted in development of intense feelings of pride and satisfaction--not only in the students who did the planning and work, but in the rest of the community which benefited from the results. Landscaping projects are excellent ways of introducing to children the concept that protection and enhancement of the environment must become personal tasks for each person if the ecology of an area is to be improved.

There are also a number of community sources of reading and other academic materials for your classroom. Some rough-and-ready intermediate boys who seem to have little time for much of the reading material the classroom supplies will spend hours studying advertising pamphlets produced by snowmobile, motorcycle and automobile companies. Large quantities of such materials are available every time new models come out.

Menus and catalogs are prime sources for mathematics activities. A few hours spent creating job cards with problems in Menu Math or Catalog Math will provide many hours of useful classroom activities. Problems can range over several years of ability levels, as the following examples show:

PROBLEM: Which costs more, a ham sandwich or a turkey sandwich?

PROBLEM: Mr. Smith takes his family to dinner. He and his wife each get the deluxe steak dinner. Patty orders veal cutlets. Jerry orders a tuna sandwich, and Jeff, who is angry that night, doesn't eat anything at all. Figure out how much the total bill will be, including a four percent sales tax and a fifteen percent tip for the waiter.

Catalogs are never hard to obtain, especially after they go out of date. Similarly, in this time of constantly rising prices, most restaurants find themselves replacing menus once or twice a year. They will always give you as many of the outdated menus as you want. Look for bright, durable, colorful menus with large print and a variety of items. By picking up menus from several different restaurants, you can also begin to introduce concepts of comparative shopping and relative value into your classroom.

Films Available

Major business concerns provide numerous aids for classroom use through their public information offices. Films are probably the most common example of efforts to reach students made by large corporations. While there is a little propaganda in most of the films, it is generally innocuous and seldom distracts from the value of the film. The most comprehensive index to commercially-produced films is The Educators' Guide to Free Films, part of a valuable series which is updated annually.

The simplest way to order large varieties and quantities of free films, however, is to use the Modern Talking Picture Service, which has several regional outlets around the country. The only cost to you will be return postage, which is quite low for films.

For some reason, many teachers feel guilty whenever they show films, as if they aren't really teaching when the lights go out. While anything can be overdone, many children would profit from greater use of filmed material. This is especially true for children who find themselves culturally or geographically isolated in such places as Indian Reservations, small farming communities, or ghettos. In addition, improved screens, self-threading projectors and flexible room arrangements make it feasible today for teachers to allow small groups of students to show themselves films at their own convenience, without interfering with the rest of the class. Under these conditions, ordering several films per week in one classroom is an entirely justifiable and useful activity.

Printed Material

Besides films, companies will provide educational booklets (General Motors has a fine series on various types of engines, for example), games such as The Ecology Game now being offered through local Coca Cola dealers, speakers who deal with many topics and even entertaining shows of professional quality, such as the touring company sent around the country each year by Chrysler Corporation. Virtually every major corporation will supply some kind of material for your classroom upon request to their public relations office. Addresses of large companies are listed in Poor's Register of Corporations, which is available in most reference libraries.

The ultimate community resource for academic learning is the newspaper. Only in recent years have large numbers of teachers begun to exploit the learning potential available in a local newspaper. The best compendium of teaching ideas involving newspapers I have seen is Newspaper in the Classroom by Jerry Abbott, principal of West Elementary School in

Grand Forks, North Dakota. Working with the Grand Forks Herald, this dynamic young educator assembled over 500 ways in which students can creatively learn from newspaper activities. Projects involving social studies, current events, language arts, mathematics and physical education may be easily centered around daily use of a newspaper. The newspaper industry has belatedly realized that its future depends upon educating a new generation of readers to use its services. For that reason, many newspapers will subsidize all or part of the cost of using their material in your classroom.

Construction Materials

Finally, construction materials can provide the physical backbone upon which most of your other classroom activities can hang. Small strips of wood can easily be gathered behind the rip saw of your local lumber yard or can be purchased at minimal expense. Large heavy-duty cardboard sheets are available free at any store which sells major appliances or furniture. If your budget allows it, an especially thick, strong form of cardboard called Tri-wall can be extremely useful in building classroom furniture and work areas. Costing about two dollars per 4' by 6' sheet, Tri-wall will support weight as well as plywood but can be shaped much more easily than lumber.

An interesting source of ideas for classroom construction projects is The Farallones Scrapbook, which is published by a free-wheeling education co-op in California. Like Big Rock Candy Mountain, a similar publication, the Scrapbook also contains numerous ideas for using ordinary materials and people in unconventional ways within schools.

Construction activities allow teachers to integrate a number of learning areas into one project. Recreation of a Norwegian home at Christmas, an Indian village, a pioneer cabin or sod hut, or a factory provides welcome relief from the steady academic diet offered children in most classrooms. Some of the skills sharpened in such an exercise are planning, organization, cooperation, art, social studies, history, reading, fine and gross motor functioning and mathematics.

Child labor and scrap materials can also be used to construct learning centers, cubby areas for private reading sessions, puppet theaters, a film and filmstrip corner and partitions between desks which not only reduce distraction when children are working at their seats but provide every child with a personal bulletin board as well.

In summary, once you get started collecting material in your classroom, your major problem will not be getting things you need, but finding space in your room for all your new "treasures." You may even decide that too much room is being taken up by such static space consumers as teacher and student desks. A number of teachers have removed traditional classroom furniture little by little to make room for new material they have gathered, resulting in a more exciting classroom environment than they would ever have been able to plan in advance.

Places

Teachers have traditionally used the places in their community in only a minimal way, by arranging for one or two field trips each year to the local water purification plant or some local point of interest. While these few trips were undoubtedly useful and interesting to the children, they barely scratch the surface of the resources available in most communities.

Actually, field trips are an art in themselves and deserve a little more discussion than they usually receive. Typically, a teacher arranges a field trip over the telephone, takes the entire class to the site on a

school bus, leads the children through the site with an employee explaining things along the way to those students who are in a position to see and hear, then follows up the activity with a few questions or an essay the next day.

There are better ways to visit the same place. First, the teacher should, as often as possible, visit the site before the class arrives and take the employee-led tour herself. Then when the class goes through the site, the teacher can do the explaining with the employee acting as escort and resource person in case questions come up. In general, employee-guides know too much about machinery and too little about your children to make effective explanations. They often bore children with needless detail and overlook the whimsical kind of curiosity children display when confronted with a fascinating new situation.

On that first solo trip you might want to take along your camera to make some slides of especially interesting or complicated subjects. In that way you can "prep" your children in advance, whet their curiosity and make some initial explanations which can be reinforced by the actual visit they will make later. Teachers sometimes think this process robs the field trip of spontaneity and interest but the reverse seems to be true. It's often more interesting to see something in actuality after you have seen it in photographs, as any tourist can verify.

The slides will also be useful for follow-up discussions after the trip. By keying discussion or writing to some of the specifics of the trip as recalled by your pictures, you can often generate a much more meaningful evaluation. It is also helpful to "prep" a few of your children with questions to ask, just in case none come up spontaneously. The most painful part of any field trip is the pregnant pause that so often occurs when the guide confronts the class with, "Well, now that you've seen everything, are there any questions?"

Actually, there is no particular reason for the entire class to go along on every trip at the same time, unless great distances or special arrangements are involved. For local visits, a cooperative parent with four or five kids can provide a very effective field trip if the teacher has adequately prepared the children with some of the methods discussed above. Such trips, by the way, are an excellent initial step toward getting parents more involved in your classroom. You might even want to arm your children with a camera and let each small group prepare a presentation to show and tell the rest of the class what they learned on the trip.

Pick a Relevant Site

Probably the key factor for successful field trips is picking a site which is relevant to the needs and interests of your children. Most of us as adults tend to overestimate the sophistication of our students--at least in the beginning. If a child can't relate the process or place being visited to his own life, he probably will have little interest in it.

One year I made a special effort to provide a large number of out-of-school experiences for my junior high school students. The least popular trip of the year was a visit to a large metropolitan airport, which included going through the control tower and a large jet plane. Despite the fact that none of the class had ever seen these things before, the trip dissolved in boredom and acting-out behavior. In marked contrast, the high point of the year was a visit to a small hot dog factory located six blocks from the school. The reason: no one in that class could relate airports or jet planes to any real part of his life. But every student ate a lot of hot dogs and had passed that factory hundreds of times before. There was immediate relevance to their present and future lives.

Increasing numbers of teachers are exploring the possibilities of modifying field trips to provide a longer experience for fewer children outside of school--in other words, sending one child, or a very small group of students, to a local office, business or agency to spend one or more full days. Businessmen have some initial resistance to this plan, but as it becomes more widely known through business channels there should be more receptiveness.

Cornell University psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner has promoted this plan with a number of large corporations after he saw how effectively it worked in Russia. One of his experiments, involving a group of 6th graders who spent three days at a big city newspaper, is described in a beautiful film called, A Place To Meet - A Way To Understand. The results indicate that children return from these visits with much higher motivation for doing classroom work, apparently because they learned that someday they will actually be expected to do some of the tasks teachers were stressing so abstractly in class. It seems to come as quite a surprise to some children to find that learning can actually be useful upon occasion.

Many other out-of-class activities are possible throughout the year. The growing interest in ecology, for example, will take on little significance in a classroom unless the children can actually get out into the environment to see how it works. With little more than a small investment in a Durham, or fermentation tube, the class can test water samples from various community sources for signs of bacterial pollution. If there is a river in the community, comparison of upstream and down-stream water samples should be quite instructive for children examining the ecological practices of their own hometown.

All of the public services of the community provide children with fine opportunities to learn science, especially if you can prepare slides to elaborate on visits to water and sewer plants, the electric company, the local airport, and the telephone company. Different trips might be made to the same sites to look from a different point of view. At the water company, for example, you might want to stress bacteriology and lab work on one trip, business and accounting practices on another, chemical content of liquids on another and pressure relationships on the last.

Another useful ecological venture is monitoring the effect of the seasons upon the environment. Bird counts, for example, can be made several times during the year. Specific trees of several different species can be observed over several months, with conditions and changes noted and recorded at each observation. Weather, usually taught quite abstractly as a "unit" in a science book, is much better dealt with on a ten-minute-a-day basis every day of the year. Students can easily build equipment to measure and record wind speed, precipitation, wind direction, high and low temperature and air pressure variations over any period of time. The UNESCO Source Book for Science Teaching and similar science source books will provide you with hundreds of ideas for using the places and things in your own community to teach science and related subjects.

People

It is even easier to get adults into your classroom than it is to get students out of it. If you can deal with one critical issue, you can get a high level of adult participation in your classroom. The issue is the natural reluctance of people to get involved with situations that provoke anxiety. Adults have one over-riding fear in classrooms: looking foolish or inadequate in front of the children, especially their own children.

Therefore, you must provide some initial structure so that the adults know exactly what is expected of them and are prepared to carry that task

out correctly. It is essential that they feel successful in their early ventures into classrooms. The easiest way to handle this problem is to prepare job cards for parents unless they are coming into the classroom to do some very specific task, such as show slides of a trip they took. Even in that case it would be wise to get the adult into your classroom ahead of time if possible and go over the session with him.

Parents in the classroom can tutor individual children (preferably not their own), work with small groups in reading or other academic areas, lead art or music activities with either large or small groups, engage in their own special interests or hobbies with children, show slides, work with motors and tools or any one of a hundred activities which you'll think of when you get to know them.

One of the most valuable things adults can do with children is discuss their own occupations. A recently published booklet called The Yellow Pages of Learning provides a number of ideas for using businessmen, craftsmen, professional workers and their respective places of employment to teach children.

Another ingenious idea dreamed up by a primary teacher was inviting adults into the classroom simply to "do their thing" for a period of time. The adults were not expected to make any kind of presentation to the class. Instead, they simply set up shop and modeled their work. As children became interested, they drifted up from time to time, watching the adult at work and asking whatever questions they wished. Some children even began to imitate the adult at work, entirely on their own.

The first such experience involved an artist who spent four days producing an oil painting from scratch. Then a carpenter built a small project in one corner of the classroom. Any number of professional and business people could simply bring the tools of their trade to school for a few hours and work in the classroom for all who are interested to watch.

Local special interest groups will also make a contribution to your classroom if you invite them. Flower and gardening clubs, country dancing groups, local historical associations and professional societies have all volunteered in the past year to work in classrooms I know.

Senior Citizens

One largely untapped resource consists of senior citizens, who often have a strong craving for involvement and lots of time to give. In this particular part of the country they constitute a unique potential, as there are still many elderly people alive who actually broke virgin sod and settled the land. Most of them came from foreign lands to settle here and have fascinating stories to tell about their pioneering ventures.

The danger in this kind of activity lies in trying to involve an entire class with the visitor. It would be much better to let this person work with a small group of children, who might even have been asked to "interview" the visitor and prepare a report for others in the class. Just as few classroom activities are going to be equally interesting to your entire class, so will few visitors hold the same fascination for every child.

One of the activities these senior citizens might contribute to is an integrated study of your community. Their recollections and souvenirs could provide the basis for construction activities which would produce an earlier culture in your community, including housing, art, clothing, speech, political and social interests and any other areas you can uncover. Old books and photographs might appear from several homes. Some children could investigate the local newspaper files to see what people wrote and thought about in

an earlier time. Others might find some fascinating trivia in nearby cemeteries.

Similar studies might be made about the community as it presently exists. Ethnic groups, politics, geography, architecture, education, historical precedents, art and music, commerce, government and religious institutions are among the topics that might be investigated. One interesting variation on this community study theme might be sharing the information with classes in other parts of the country. In that way, children would learn not only about their own home but someone else's as well. The classes might want to work together to plan their studies and share papers, photographs, maps, etc., at frequent intervals as they progressed.*

In conclusion, I have tried to summarize a few of the ways teachers can introduce reality into their classrooms. At the moment, far too much classroom time is being spent in an artificial world constructed largely of paper. The real world is exciting, challenging and highly involving--the paper world is flat, repetitive and largely boring. The materials of reality are all around you no matter where you teach. Why not reach out, pick them up and use them?

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*I will be happy to serve as "middleman" for classes which want to share community studies (or anything else) with each other. At the moment, I can direct requests to classrooms in North Dakota, Alaska, New York, New Jersey, Illinois and New Mexico. I'm sure others will develop if the interest exists.

Bibliography
Compiled by Peter C. Madden

Farallones Scrapbook, ($4.25). Farallones Designs, Star Route, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956. 144 pages.

This free-flowing book combines classroom arrangement, teaching ideas, construction activities, poetry, domes and a compendium of rapping and opinion in a very pleasant and useful package.

Big Rock Candy Mountain, ($4.00) Portola Institute, 1115 Merrill St., Menlo Park, CA 94025. Published quarterly.

Has a "counterculture" ring to it, like its parent publication, The Whole Earth Catalog. Many useful teaching ideas and sources of classroom material are presented in a highly palatable form. Also opinions about education, mostly of the free school persuasion.

Beautiful Junk, (free). By Diane Warner and Jeanne Quill. Project Head Start, Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington, D.C.

A concise presentation of ideas for using common community and home materials for arts, crafts and construction in classrooms. Usefulness definitely extends beyond preschool years.

Trash to Treasure, ($1.00), by Sue McCord. Project Change, State University of New York at Cortland, Cortland, NY.

More nice ideas for using castoff materials in the classroom. Stresses art projects. Well illustrated.

A Starter Catalog of Free Materials, (free). The Resource Center for Man-Made Environment Education, Department of Architecture, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND 58102.

Paul Groth and Rick Engebretson have done a fine job of indexing the resources available to classroom teachers for relating architectural and engineering concepts to more traditional "subjects." Catalog also includes some features of the social environment that teachers might draw upon.

Yellow Pages of Learning, ($1.95). Edited by Richard S. Wurman. The MIT Press, MIT, Cambridge, MA 02142.

Very clever discussions of techniques for helping children from the occupations, institutions and objects to be found in any community. Ranges from airport to cemetery to tree stump to zoo. A first-rate and invaluable product.

Sourcebook for Science Teaching, ($5.25). UNESCO, United Nations, New York, NY.

First produced as an aid for schools in devastated nations following World War II, this book continues to provide several hundred ideas for making science equipment from the junk lying about the average bombed out city or African village. Will eliminate forever the excuse, "I can't teach science because our school has no equipment."

Film catalogs for classroom use:

(1) Modern Talking Picture Service
9129 Lyndale Ave. South
Minneapolis, MN 55420

Many, many good films for your classroom for the price of return postage only.

(2) State Film Catalog, from

North Dakota Film Library
State University Station
Fargo, ND 58102

Nearly every state has at least one major film library, which contains purely educational films as well as the commercial varieties available above.

(3) Educators Guide to Free Films ($11.00 approx.) Educators Progress Service, Inc.
Randolph, WI

This book, updated annually, is the ultimate reference for classroom films which are available free. The same company produces similar volumes covering Social Studies Materials; Tapes, Scripts and Transcriptions; Filmstrips; Science Materials; Teaching Aids and Media and Methods.

A Place to Meet - A Way to Understand, (free film). National Audio-Visual Center, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C.

A beautiful film about children learning about the world of work through an extended visit to the offices and plant of a major newspaper. Reports on the experiments being conducted by Urie Bronfenbrenner on the merging of school and community.

A-V Instruction Media and Materials, by James Brown, Richard Lewis and Fred Harcleroad. McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969

Chapter six, titled "Inexpensive supplementary materials," presents a good summary of easily-obtained materials, with special stress on government publications and materials.

Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Printing Office Publications, ($4.50 per year). Available from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Lists government publications subject and title.

Landscaping for Living, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1972. Available from the office of a federal legislator.

The current USDA yearbook. Back issues of previous yearbooks also can be obtained from the same source.

Distribution Center, U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Center, Denver, CO 80225.

Source of Index of Topographical Maps and various local maps ordered from the Index.

Soil Conservation Service, a federal office located in virtually every county seat.

Will provide a wide variety of printed material related to conservation, wild life, water resources and plants. Will also (if requested no later than the previous autumn) provide free planting material for shelter-belts and "outdoor classrooms" on school property.

Newspaper in the Classroom, ($3.00), by Jerry Abbott. Grand Forks Herald, Grand Forks, ND 58201. 1970.

An extremely comprehensive guide for using newspapers at school. The ideas cover most subject areas and range from kindergarten to 12th grades.

A Useful List of Classroom Items That Can Be Scrounged or Purchased. Early Childhood Education Study, Inc., EDC, 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02160.

This handy list is one of the few which breaks down resources by subject areas (math, language arts, etc.). In addition to free materials, this booklet covers a variety of low cost games, toys, puzzles and science aids.

Poor's Register of Corporations, published annually by Standard and Poor's Corp., New York, NY.

A more concise and easily obtainable list of major corporations is the annual list of "The Five Hundred Largest Corporations in America" published each spring by Fortune magazine. However, only Poor's directory will provide actual mailing addresses.

Tri-Wall Container Corp., Butler, IN:

The source of Tri-wall, the invaluable classroom construction material. 4' by 6' sheets of Tri-wall are currently selling for $2.09 per sheet--unfortunately, in lots of 100 sheets. Smaller sheets are also available in smaller lots and at lower costs.

Thematic Approach Discussed by an English Headmaster

Bill Turgeon

"All individualized work in my program comes under the umbrella of a general thematic structure," explained Gordon Hill, a visiting consultant who became a temporary faculty member at the University of North Dakota New School of Behavioral Studies in Education. Hill joined the New School staff April 20 and worked with the program through May 10.

Headmaster of the Stafford Leys County Primary School, Leicestershire, England, Hill uses what he calls the "thematic approach" in his school. Working under the thematic approach, the teacher chooses a study topic that Hill calls a starting point. "As the kids get more and more involved in their study of the subject," he said, "the whole group breaks up into smaller units of three or four. Each group studies a particular aspect of the general topic and they become very involved with their study as they expand upon it and develop it."

An excellent starting point, according to Hill, is children's literature. He cited one example where a teacher, to excite interest in a printing press the school had recently obtained, introduced a book on the beginnings of the printing craft in England in the 16th century. "Immediately, the kids, greatly enthused, broke up into small groups where the studies ranged from costume style of the era to chemical processes used in the 16th century printing, to architecture of 16th century London, where the story took place."

From these groups, individual students developed special interests. Hill told of one girl who ended up studying printing while one boy became completely involved in the chemical processes of treating copper for printmaking. "As the group continued to study the book, small groups and individuals contributed their findings to the entire group's discussion."

Hill emphasized that, under the thematic approach, every child is trusted with the responsibility of developing his own experience field. In this way, each has the opportunity to contribute something of his own to the entire group. Each kid is working as an individual, but within the group, and his contributions not only strengthen his own self-confidence, but also strengthen the worth of the whole group.

"In this situation, not only does the child contribute to the group, but the teacher makes very real contributions too," Hill reported. The teacher studies various aspects of the topic as well as helping the kids develop their work on each subject. "I feel that elementary teachers so often become elementary people, but under the thematic approach they can study and contribute right along with their students. The difference is though, they study and contribute at an adult level."

The thematic approach has provided for the teacher, "a field of reference, a boundary within which he can function securely and actually

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become involved right along with his students." Working from a starting point, within a theme, the teacher has more of a grasp on the situation. He knows that each of his students is working on some aspect of that theme, according to Hill. "I feel that in a highly individualized program, where each student is working at his own rate on his own project, the kids are denied the contributions which can be offered by teacher involvement."

Teacher involvement appears in another way in Hill's school. The students are urged to use the various teachers' resources in each of their specialized fields. "If a kid is studying the art of a period, for example, under a certain theme, then he goes to the teacher next door whose specialty is art."

Not only are students and teachers involved in the thematic approach. Parents in the community are involved as well. "Before we started the new method in our school, we met with all the parents in the community and held several informal information sessions with them," Hill said. "Now the parents are so interested in the school they actually come in and act as teacher aids. Some of the most interested ones have attended reading and mathematics workshops and are helping teach these subjects in the classrooms." Because the parents, teachers and children have all been brought together in one setting, Hill observed that the school has really become the focal point of the community.

An Argument in Favor of the Thematic Approach

Sharon Melancon

Mrs. Sharon Melancon wrote this article while completing her master's degree in the New School, University of North Dakota.

My major question in coming to the New School was related to finding out the importance of the individual in relation to the group. For example, if in individualizing instruction you develop a classroom of children each doing his own thing at his own level, what is the end product? What is the purpose of individualized education?

At the same time, I felt a concern for the intrinsic group or home community that the self-contained classroom constitutes for the elementary child. Modern trends are toward team teaching and differentiated staffing, which sometimes results in large groups of children working under a master teacher and paraprofessionals. Children working in such a situation can lose their sense of identity within the group. It can become another aspect of the disintegration and isolation of society, the compartmentalization of life and the build up of individuality and ego in a child to the exclusion of his finding a meaningful relationship within his group and a responsible attitude toward others.

I had read a book which impressed me called An Experiment in Education by Sybil Marshall, an English primary school teacher. Gordon Hill, a disciple of hers, spent the summer of 1969 at the New School and through his influence I came in contact with the "thematic approach."

Briefly, this method begins with a theme chosen by the teacher or growing out of an experience together with the children, and it develops through questions leading in many directions. The teacher plays a definite role in planning a first circle of experiences, taking in as many curriculum areas as possible, and then in encouraging divergency as it develops from the children's interests. It differs from the unit or project method currently in use in elementary schools in that one does not attempt to keep the areas studied restricted by the original theme. Instead it encourages the children to follow their leads as they are suggested by the theme. Thus, a child studying astronauts may get hung up on a study of fabrics, which in turn grew out of his interest in the clothing worn by space travelers. Or, a person studying aqua lungs may come to the study of archeology and deep sea exploration, leading to an interest in early civilization.

The unit method uses a problem solving or scientific approach and follows logical progression in covering a subject. Most textbooks are constructed along these lines. However, this is an adult approach, to a subject. Children seem to me to learn through a much less logical way. In his book, How Children Learn, John Holt says:

"They see the world as a whole, mysterious perhaps, but a whole none the less. They do not divide it up into airtight little categories, as we adults tend to do. It is natural

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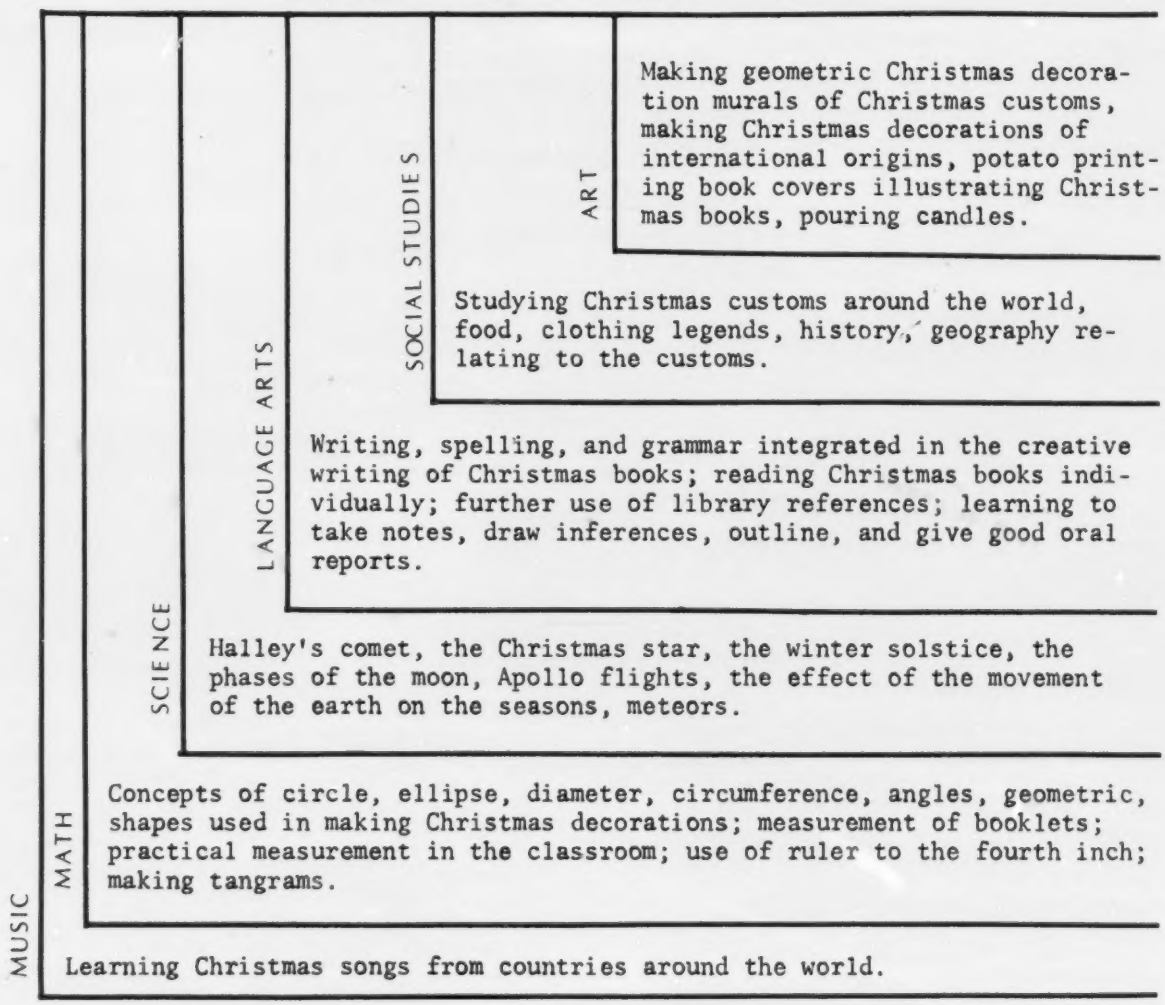
From Insights, November 1970, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 3-8.

for them to jump from one thing to another, and to make the kinds of connections that are rarely made in formal classes and textbooks. They make their own paths into the unknown, paths that we would never think of making for them."

It is necessary for us as adults to find a way to approach the elementary curriculum in a way that preserves a unified approach for the child and still leaves room for individualization and flexibility, in which they are free to make their jumps from one interest and subject area to another. The thematic approach provides this framework for a teacher.

We worked out a theme on "Christmas Around the World" during the 1969-70 school year which encompassed the whole curriculum for a period of six weeks. This period is described in detail in my master's degree research paper and can be summarized by the flow chart. The chart illustrates the teacher's planning in advance, and the summaries of the children's projects show the distance that can be traveled from the original theme.

FLOW CHART - Christmas Around the World


ART
Making geometric Christmas decoration murals of Christmas customs, making Christmas decorations of international origins, potato printing book covers illustrating Christmas books, pouring candles.
SOCIAL STUDIES
Studying Christmas customs around the world, food, clothing legends, history, geography relating to the customs.
LANGUAGE ARTS
Writing, spelling, and grammar integrated in the creative writing of Christmas books; reading Christmas books individually; further use of library references; learning to take notes, draw inferences, outline, and give good oral reports.
SCIENCE
Halley's comet, the Christmas star, the winter solstice, the phases of the moon, Apollo flights, the effect of the movement of the earth on the seasons, meteors.
MATH
Concepts of circle, ellipse, diameter, circumference, angles, geometric, shapes used in making Christmas decorations; measurement of booklets; practical measurement in the classroom; use of ruler to the fourth inch; making tangrams.
MUSIC
Learning Christmas songs from countries around the world.

I personally found that the thematic approach fostered individualization at the interest level of the children, while keeping them within a structure in which they felt their contribution to the group and the theme as a whole. It tended to give wider meaning to individual findings. In addition, it was rewarding and stimulating to the teacher, for instead of repeating the same grade level curriculum year after year, there was the challenge of new interests and the opportunity for study and involvement on the adult level with the same theme. The interest in mythology awakened in me through last year's theme is something I hope to explore with children this year.

I certainly came to know the children and their interests more completely using this method than in any previous year of teaching in the more traditional patterns. I also feel that their talents were given more freedom to develop, and our principal and some parents noticed this, too.

Motivation for using the theme approach also came from the out-of-the-way, surprising pieces of information the children uncovered in their studies. The world is a fascinating place and once children discover this for themselves, no contrived motivation by the teacher is necessary. I don't know of another method which provides such a workable framework within which the teacher can provide for individual differences and interests. The only alternative is to take a body of material with limited objectives and organize it in some form so that each child can cover it at his own pace, with perhaps some variation of tasks built in. This does not really make provision for the different learning styles of children.

When self-motivation leads children in their own directions, the role of the teacher changes from that of planning activities for the whole class to that of becoming a resource person who helps them find the materials and information they need. The teacher also becomes a sounding board for receiving and reinforcing new concepts. It is a very taxing role because there is always more you can do than time permits.

A natural cycle seems to emerge during the use of a theme. Large group activities planned by the teacher generate interest in the theme, leading to small group activities again planned by the teacher. The individual projects growing out of these experiences tend to stretch the children's interests. The projects can be planned to meet individual needs and can be diversified not only with relation to subject matter, but also to learning style and individual problems. It is in the area of overcoming emotional or behavioral problems that some of the most exciting rewards take place.

Practically speaking, I find that it is still necessary to teach the skills of reading carefully to some, but not all, children at the third and fourth grade level. With most other curriculum areas, it is possible to develop the necessary skills as the need for them becomes apparent. Some children also need more structure than others and are confused by too many choices. Their needs can be met by pairing them with stronger students or working with them in small groups. Often, the outlet and recognition gained by succeeding in areas other than academic, which is possible when a theme approach is used, will solve behavioral problems that have blocked the learning process.

We elementary teachers are being asked to meet gargantuan challenges by the critics of traditional education. The methodology and structure of our schools are changing rapidly, and many ideas are being tried. My experience with the thematic approach has supported my belief that the self-contained classroom with a family-sized group of children, in which the teacher can come to know her children well, is the most effective framework within which individualization can

take place.

There are two reasons supporting this feeling. First, there is a philosophical belief in the importance of the class as a primary group for a child. In our urbanized, technological society, the child has no purposeful role to play, and he is "tacked onto the edge" of society as a dependent, even through college years. In ancient civilizations, the child in the community and family had a purposeful role. This was also true even more recently in rural areas where children were given definite responsibilities. By and large, it is not true today. The child can begin to function well only when what he does and feels can be shared with others. In this process, he becomes a purposeful person and a recognized member of his group. For the child his primary group is his class, and we must make this a place where growth as a purposeful member of society can take place. Classrooms where individuality is emphasized for its own sake do not meet this need in children. There is no place in education for individualization to the exclusion of the group, according to Gordon Hill.

Secondly, the purpose of education for our children seems to be changing from that of storing up knowledge, which can be done so much more effectively by computers, to that of exercising their highest potentialities for using judgment and creativity. As John Holt puts it: "Today, the child who has been taught in school to stuff his head with facts is so obsolete even before he leaves the building. Anything he can do or be taught to do, a machine can do and soon will do, cheaper and better. What children need, even just to make a living, are qualities that can never be trained into a machine--inventiveness, flexibility, resourcefulness, curiosity, and, above, all, judgment." (Holt, "Why We Need New Schooling," Look, Jan. 13, 1970).

If we are to foster this development, our classrooms must be places where children can exist as total human beings, reacting and interacting with one another and the teacher. The teacher can only effectively individualize to the extent to which she knows her students, and the important aspects of knowing them lie not in their I.Q. scores, reading scores, or development in skill areas, but in their developing personalities with all the problems, joys, sorrows, feelings and ideas which go to make up the human personality. In order for this to happen, the group of which he is a member must be of a size where interaction is fostered.

There are two factors which seem to be pushing a trend toward either departmentalization in elementary schools or large groupings of children taught by a team of teachers and paraprofessionals.

The first factor is economics, pure and simple. Teacher salaries have risen so that the teacher is the most expensive commodity in the classroom. It is cheaper to group 60 to 70 children with two teachers and one paraprofessional, than to put them in self-contained classrooms. It has been my experience in observing these classrooms that the individualization that takes place usually confines itself to skills areas or subject matter knowledge which can be routinized in some manner. The role of the paraprofessional is usually that of checking work or taking care of a highly structured math program involving a great deal of record keeping. This does not seem to me to be leading in the direction of humanizing our education, because we can routinize only what becomes standardized--the opposite of using creative, flexible methods that demand the use of pupil judgment and resourcefulness.

Secondly, there is a feeling that elementary teachers need to be better versed in their subject fields, and some studies have shown that children grow farther with teachers who have strong subject matter backgrounds. Instead of departmentalizing to meet

this need, a self-contained classroom system in which each teacher is given broad scope for developing her own interests will result in certain strengths coming to the fore in each teacher. Where there is free interaction among faculty, children will naturally go to the teacher who can help him in the area of his strength. This has happened in the schools in England using the thematic approach and can be encouraged to happen here.

The thematic approach seems to be a method by which a child can be helped to develop his skills and knowledge of the world in an integrated manner. It does this through a humanistic, individualistic approach, while retaining a structure and framework within which the teacher may operate comfortably.

Ma Bell in the Classroom

Lowell Thompson — University of North Dakota

Why not? Can you think of another institution, save mental institutions and prisons, that doesn't provide telephones for the people within that setting? I could imagine why prisons might not want to encourage communications with the "outside," but I can think of no reason why schools would want to discourage such communications.

Many educators (including Silberman, Perrone, Kozol, Boutwell) believe that learning does not have to be and should not be confined to the classroom. Little has been done, however, to facilitate this learning outside of the classroom. Occasionally, of course, a class will take a field trip, a resource person will be invited into the classroom, or a telephone call will be made to gather some information; but, by and large, the potentially rich learning environment found beyond the classroom has not been tapped.

The telephone provides a very effective means to tap this rich potential. If a telephone were installed in every classroom, and if students had reasonably free access to use the telephone, a whole world of supplementary learning experience would be open to the students.

The resources of community people--parents, businesses, governmental agencies--and other institutions would be at the learners' finger tips.

There is some evidence to suggest that most people are not only willing, but are also anxious to help a student. Boutwell (1969), Stradley (1967), Weed (1969), and others indicate that parents, businesses, etc., generally react very favorably to a request for information or assistance made by a student.

The telephone could also be used by students to conduct interviews, to poll parents on significant issues within the community, or to visit with older people about the history of their community. Students could also call people "in the news."

One group of students called a high school basketball coach who, the papers reported, refused to let "long hairs" or people who associated with other people who smoked to play on the team. The story the students got from the coach was quite a bit different than the newspaper story. Other classes have called famous writers, scientists and political figures.

Another advantage of a telephone in the classroom is to allow parents to become directly involved in the education of their children. This involvement is essential to quality education.

There is evidence suggesting that the degree of success experienced by any given student is closely related to the degree to which the student's parents (or significant others) are involved in the student's education. The telephone would enhance this involvement by faciliating increased communication between parent and child and also between parent and teacher.

A number of schools are attempting to broaden this involvement through parent-teacher conferences,

and although this has generally been a successful practice, it also has some disadvantages. There is still reluctance on the part of some parents to attend parent-teacher conferences. Many parents feel intimidated by this experience and justifiably so. The parent is going into a completely foreign environment to talk to someone--almost a stranger--about one of the most important people in their lives. Conferences held in the home have the same kind of effect on teachers, and, in addition, draw more heavily on the teacher's time.

The telephone could prove to be the most neutral way to facilitate communication between parent and teacher. Both parent and teacher react from the secure environment of classroom or home, and this type of neutral exchange may be essential in establishing a more intensive relationship. It is also much less formal than the normal parent-teacher conference, could be initiated by either parent or teacher, and demands less in terms of time than the school-based conference.

Several teachers known to this writer set aside a few minutes every afternoon to call a parent or two just to ask how "Johnny" is getting along--does he seem to be enjoying school, is he having any problems, are you satisfied with his learning, etc.

This is usually a very pleasant visit for both the teacher and parent. It would be ever more pleasant for the teacher if she didn't have to run down to the principal's office but could instead make the call after school over a cup of coffee from her own classroom.

Education and Technology

Educators also believe that technology is going to play a much larger role in education than it has in the past. They are thinking in terms of computer-assisted instruction, open access systems, informational retrieval, learning nets and a number of other highly sophisticated systems.

The surprising thing is that educators have not used the technology that is available--namely the telephone. It's right there. It works well. It's dependable. It's inexpensive. Nearly everyone can operate it. It's sophisticated in that it will put one in contact with nearly any information that exists in the world, and it has a human element. What more could you ask of technology? And it's there, not being used.

Students could be introduced to this wonderful age of technology at a very early age. Even primary students could learn the proper use of the telephone and could begin to understand some of the technology involved in this very complex communication network.

Humanizing Education

Educators also believe that technology alone will not significantly affect the quality of education. Education and learning, in the final analysis, are functions of human interaction. Most of what we know and most of what we learn is known or learned because of someone. The telephone would not detract from that essential person-to-person aspect of learning. It would, in fact, enhance it. You have to call somebody on the telephone. You can't, given the present state of the art, call a thing.

There is a growing concern in our society that things ought to be more personal and there is a desire to return to a less complex life. The telephone will not replace the baker as the source of apprenticeship but I think most bakers, butchers and candlestick makers would be delighted to share their knowledge with youngsters.

The extent to which the telephone can act as a humanizing force in our society is limited only by the degree to which it can put a "learner type person" in contact with a "teacher type person." We need not think of

"learner" as a student, nor, do we need to limit our thinking of "teacher" to one who works in a school. Learning happens between people...just people.

Organizational Patterns

Educators, as well as a number of people in the business community, are beginning to think more in terms of horizontal, as opposed to vertical, organizational structures. The rationale, as I understand it is that decisions should be made as low in the organization as possible and that those directly concerned should be the ones making the decisions.

As a former principal, I can attest to the fact that administrator's time and energies are largely consumed by things that could easily have been handled between parent, teacher and child.

A telephone in each classroom could have the effect of decentralizing the decisions that affect only the student and his teacher. The parent could simply call their child's classroom. Most decisions involving individual children can be handled at this level.

The Procedure

How can parent-teacher associations help in establishing telephones in classrooms? First of all, they might want to weigh the merits of the program in one of their meetings. If the membership agreed it was a worthwhile proposal, the teachers could then be polled to determine which teachers might be interested. If some were interested, a formal proposal could be made by the PTA to either the principal or to the school board.

The amount of money needed to institute this program is very small but if the school district is unable to finance the project, the PTA might be willing to provide the funds necessary and might also want to conduct an informal survey of parents, teachers and children to determine the effectiveness of the project.

A telephone log might also be kept to help determine the program's effectiveness. This log could list the date, the time, the name of the caller and the reason for each call.

One final procedural note: All teachers will not want a telephone in their room. If two or three agree to try it and if it works for them, other teachers will be more inclined to try the program.

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A Case for Economic Education

David E. Ramsett and Richard V. Kauffman - University of North Dakota

Too few educators are aware of the many opportunities for children to learn basic economic concepts and relationships in the elementary school classroom. Ten years ago conventional wisdom dictated that teaching economics in elementary grades was the ultimate in absurdity. In fact, economics was making only minor inroads into the high school curriculum, and was often considered too difficult even for college freshmen.

That the elementary school classroom is not the appropriate place to acquaint students with economics has been disproved now for some time. It has been disproved by the simple fact that exciting learning experiences involving economics are on-going in many schools in North Dakota and throughout the nation. In increasing numbers of elementary classrooms innovative teachers have made students think of economics as anything but the "dismal science."

The Impetus for Change

The question logically arises about what factors led to the change in attitude on the part of classroom teachers and curriculum planners that contributed to the growth of concern for economics in the elementary grades. A primary consideration was that educators had underestimated the learning capacity of young children. It was discovered by such pioneers in economic education as Larry Senesh and others, however, that school age children can deal with economic abstractions when they are creatively introduced into the learning process. More important was the realization that some basic yet extremely important economic concepts which closely affect our lives are not unnecessarily abstract--nor are they particularly complex. Indeed, there is much in the scope of economics that can be readily taught to youngsters.

For example, the most basic proposition in economics is that resources are scarce and we therefore cannot produce all the goods and services we might want. This economic generalization might be translated into the child's experience in the following way: "Because family income is limited, while its wants for goods and services is unlimited, the family must choose which of its many wants it will satisfy." The family or household unit is of course very important to children and household spending decisions usually affect them directly at a very early age. What an excellent opportunity to show through various possible activities that this is a problem faced by every household and therefore by all people in our society.[1] It is even too early

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From Insights, December 1975, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 2-5.

[1]One enterprising teacher gave individual "paychecks," from which taxes had been deducted, to her third grade pupils. After paying bills for mortgages, utilities, auto loans, etc. the students were free to spend any remaining amount in a "shopping center" staffed by local merchants that had been set up in the school. Businesses in the shopping center included a supermarket, clothing store, hairdresser, physician's office, drug

to make children aware of this simple but none-the-less crucial concept?

There are a number of very powerful economic concepts which certainly should not overwhelm other subject matter areas in the elementary grades that are given no attention whatsoever in the average elementary curriculum. A sampling of these would include the following:

--production is more efficient when there is specialization; for example, when there is a division of household chores among family members.

--by specializing we all become dependent on each other for the goods and services we want; we have to learn to get along well with our neighbors.

--when there is specialization and division of labor the use of money makes it easier for us to exchange different kinds of goods and services.

--the "real" cost of something we choose is the other things we have to give up; spending all of an allowance on a new baseball means you can't stop at the Dairy Queen for a banana split.

The list could readily be expanded. As a matter of fact, such lists have proliferated to the extent that a national task force of economic educators is currently attempting a codification. The final task force report will isolate a limited number of key concepts that should be included in the elementary school curriculum and will serve as a resource guide for grade placement and implementation of the various economic generalizations, concepts and understandings.

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store, variety store, appliance shop, travel agency, restaurant, bank, insurance company, utility firms and others.

Career Education Component

A recent additional impetus for introducing and expanding economics teaching in the elementary school has been the identification of economic awareness as an essential element in a comprehensive program of career education. Economic understanding is useful to people not only as citizens and consumers, but in their role of worker as well. The conceptual link between economics and career education is revealed in the following statement by a leading economic educator:

> Economics provides a structured perception of the process by which society provisions itself, an organized way of looking at both the means and ends of productive activity. This is something that career education sorely lacks and desperately needs: a systematic way of looking at the world-of-work--not just particular vocations and occupational clusters, but the socio-economic environment within which careers are planned and pursued.[2]

The earlier economic understanding is developed, the more quickly it can become an integral part in young people's career investigation, planning and decision-making.

Overdose?

One might counter all this with what is perhaps an "overdose" argument against the introduction of new disciplines into the elementary curriculum; that is, there is just not enough time to do all the many things outsiders are suggesting ought to be done. In the case of economic education, however, the asking time is miniscule. And, if appropriately done, economic education really need not be carried on at the expense of

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[2]Robert L. Darcy, "Economics and Career Education," Social Studies Review, (California Council for the Social Studies, Spring 1974, Vol. 13, No. 4.

any other portion of the curriculum as it has historically developed.

Teachers rarely need to "formally" teach economics. Economics is already embedded in the social studies curriculum (albeit mostly hidden), and it can often serve as a unifying theme in other areas as well (note the way in which a study of inflation might be related to a lesson in arithmetic). Virtually any classroom event provides countless outlets for consideration of economic concepts. The simple yet everyday occurrence of some student wearing a new article of clothing can provide a stage for discussion about what was needed to produce the item. Every day, elementary teachers are developing ingenious ideas for effective inclusion of economic concepts in the elementary school curriculum.

Leadership in Economic Education

Perhaps the most vital impetus in building a base of support for economic education in the primary and intermediate grades has been the leadership role played by the National Joint Council on Economic Education. Headquartered in New York, the Joint Council is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan, educational organization incorporated in 1949 to encourage, improve, coordinate and service an economic education movement. The principal medium for expanding and improving economic education is a network of some 50 affiliated state, local and regional councils on Economic Education and more than 100 Centers on Economic Education located on college and university campuses across the nation.

In North Dakota, for example, the North Dakota Council on Economic Education (NDCEE) has now been in existence for five years. Its responsibilities are to formulate a state-wide program of economic education with financial and manpower support from the education, business, agriculture and labor communities. A Board of Trustees, composed of state leaders in these areas, directs NDCEE activities. To aid NDCEE in carrying out its objectives, Centers for Economic Education have been established at the University of North Dakota and Minot State College.

A state-wide program of economic education consists of a number of component parts all of which are oriented toward improving the quantity and quality of economic education in the public school curriculum. The cornerstone of any Council's program is a consistent offering of in-service and summer institutes, workshops, and seminars for teachers, curriculum planners and administrators designed to provide information, content and teaching strategies. Most State Councils on Economic Education provide annually a number of teacher workshops designed to:

1) help teachers become aware of the kinds of economic concepts which should be taught at various grade levels;

2) present alternative teaching strategies (such as case studies, games-simulations, etc.) which have been developed to introduce students to economics; and

3) disseminate the many materials and teaching aids which are now available through the Joint Council and its affiliates.[3]

A number of State Councils have established special affiliations with selected school systems through the National Developmental Economic Education Program (DEEP). This constitutes a cooperative effort between a school system, the local state council and the Joint Council to implement a

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[3]This past summer NDCEE offered a two-week workshop for elementary teachers in the Jamestown, North Dakota vicinity and a one-week workshop in Grand Forks for secondary teachers on economic games-simulations. Nationally, about 3,000 teachers participate in such workshops each summer.

coordinated program of economic education at all grade levels (K-12). Some 200 school systems in more than 40 states currently participate in the DEEP program.

Additionally, most Centers on Economic Education offer individual help to teachers and school systems requesting aid. Each Center maintains an up-to-date library of economic education materials which are made available to interested people on loan. Complimentary copies of any excellent materials in economic education can often be provided.

One other significant program administered by the Joint Council deserves mention here. This is the annual Awards Program for the Teaching of Economics. The Awards Program provides recognition and prizes to teachers at all levels who have developed and applied exemplary strategies in the teaching of economics.[4] Each year the Joint Council publishes an account of these winning activities in Economic Education Experiences of Enterprising Teachers. Twelve issues are now in print. The cost of these and most other materials developed and published by the Joint Council are almost insignificant when compared to publications of the traditional supplies in the field. Moreover, all are available on loan through local Centers on Economic Education.

There is a case for economic education in the elementary school and the proof is on-going in the elementary classrooms of this nation. Forward looking teachers, with a little support from a now well-developed network of Councils and Centers on Economic Education, have plunged into a foreboding area--economics--and have turned it into an exciting, relevant subject for students at every grade level.

(Editor's Note: Information about Economic Education may be obtained by writing to the authors at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota 58202.)

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[4]The Awards were known in the past as the "Kazanjian Awards" because of support for the program received from the Calvin K. Kazanjian Economics Foundation. Program support has recently been assumed by the International Paper Company Foundation.

Dollars & Sense in the Classroom

Ed Gomez

Economics in the classroom involves the utilization of the skills a child has acquired in a realistic manner. Educators hope that the tasks children are involved in when they are young will prepare them to assume their adult role in society. Economics in the classroom is no revelation; rather, it is simply a common sense way of involving children in things that they may be doing tomorrow.

How can economics in the classroom be implemented?

There are a variety of methods that might be employed. I will tell you of my own experience. You may already have your own.

The economic microcosm created in my class by the children and me was a system which followed a natural evolutionary process. Events led to other events, which in turn led to others, etc. There was no definite plan to be implemented to insure maximum success.

Our first task was to devise a currency. In order to carry out financial transactions, we needed money. I began by announcing to the class that we were going to have paper money. "For what?", the class replied. "It's just like Monopoly money and you can't do anything with it!"

We began to discuss the American dollar and realized that we had to give our currency value. We decided we would create our own goods and services.

In the days following, I began to initiate financial activity by bringing second-hand "junk" to the class each day. I held auctions selling the items to the highest bidders. The children brought various items and also engaged in various transactions using our "money." The currency was designed and printed by the students. Each student received a salary.

Things began to happen.

Some students supplemented their income by running for election as class officers (who received substantial salaries). A class treasury with an elected treasurer was established. People were paid by check or cash by the treasurer each week. Using democratic procedures, the class established policies to make certain that the class monies would be well protected. A strong box was requisitioned from the teacher's personal belongings.

Some students established banks in which other students would deposit their money. Savings and checking accounts also were set up.

A number of self-initiated activities began. One boy established a movie theater, showing films, selling refreshments, etc. A few children began to publish a newspaper, reporting things happening in the class. Another child set up a rock store where others could purchase from the assortment of rocks he had laboriously collected. There were countless efforts.

From Insights, November 1971, Vol. IV, No. 3, pp. 4-6. Ed Gomez was a New School doctoral student when this article was written.

Some children even hired themselves to others as tutors.

Money is a prime motivator in our society. It was certainly true of the children. Many of the children worked hard at bettering themselves financially. Some became financiers. Others (usually the smooth talkers) became lawyers for people who were tried in the class court for breaking community rules. Others established their own gambling casinos.

Some of the children became extremely rich through the aid of the class stock market. One enterprising individual, the same person who initiated the movie theater, amassed in a period of seven months over eight quintillion dollars ($8,000,000,000,000,000,000). All this he accomplished through careful manipulation of the stock market. Watch out, Howard Hughes!

The important point we discovered was: when goods and services diminished, the value placed on money likewise diminished. Therefore, there always had to be something for which the children could spend their money. I sold wood and nails to some people who wanted to build things. I sold bubble gum and popcorn. All these efforts, along with the children's enterprises, helped to maintain the value of the class currency.

There probably will never be two economic communities which are identical. You will find that yours would be unique. I really feel that the teacher's role as an enthusiastic participant is the key factor for success.

What will the children learn from all this?

Many of the tasks the children involved themselves in will help in strengthening the following concepts:

Reading numbers
Counting money
Number value
Keeping savings and checking accounts
Bidding
Retailing
Basic operational skills
Measuring linear, square areas
Oral communication
Inflation and deflation
Borrowing money
Business organization
American democracy

The Stock Market

The class "stock market" is a learning tool that utilizes many basic operational skills. It is run by the students with the aid of the New York stock listings.

Rules and regulations concerning buying and selling stocks are set up by a committee of interested students. Below is a list of the rules and regulations used by my class. Your class might devise different ones.

1. All computations are done by the buyer.
2. You are allowed to buy from the available share "pool." Each corporation has a pool of 5,000 shares. If Bill Smith buys 300 shares, there are only 4,700 shares available for sale. When a person sells shares back to the market, they immediately go back into the pool. So, eventually you could buy and own 100% of the available stock in each corporation.
3. The prices for the day are taken from the day's New York quotations and posted each morning. They remain the same all day.
4. You have to buy in lots of ten.

We enjoyed success using the guidelines above. You might find ways to improve the game. Good luck!

All This and Economics Too

Jo Ann Gregory

He had to be kidding! I was already teaching reading, writing, math, science, music, art, phy-ed, health, manners and morals and now he wanted me to take a summer workshop to learn how to teach elementary economics.

"ME?" I said, "I nearly flunked the only college economics course I ever took. I want to spend this summer with my kids! How about my fireworks stand? I want to go to the lake? I have relatives coming. Not me!"

"You!", he said.

I signed up.

June found me in Gamble Hall at the University of North Dakota at a workshop in Economic Education under the direction of Dr. David Ramsett and it was great! We were each asked to write a project to be used at our grade level that would incorporate some basic economic concepts. For me it was easiest to write several mini-projects to incorporate into themes we were presently using as well as one larger project to be used in the year. It was amazing how easily these concepts could be incorporated with math, writing, art, language and social studies.

Second grade social studies programs are traditionally centered around the neighborhood and community helpers. In an effort to broaden the students' understanding of the variety of jobs in any neighborhood, we wrote letters to our parents asking them to come to our classroom and talk to us about their jobs. When a parent agreed to come to visit us, we sent home a list of questions we would like answered. These questions included: "How long have you had that job?" "What things are bad about your job?" "How much training and/or education was required?" "When did you decide to be a banker?" etc.

The parents felt that the question sheet gave them some idea of what to say when they arrived. We usually tried to see a filmstrip or read something about the business or career before our guest arrived so that we could ask intelligent questions.

It was an easy step from there to introduce concepts such as wants, needs, producer, consumer, income taxes, supply and demand. To reinforce these concepts, students did various mini-projects which they displayed and explained to the rest of the class and also presented to the parents at openhouse. For example, some of the students made large posters that depicted wants and needs at various age levels. We found that wants changed by age and sex but needs remained about the same for all.

Another group made murals of places that we all owned together because we paid taxes. These included such things as the parks, the library, a firehall, a police car and a school.

At our school it was a tradition to entertain our parents during the month of May. We realized that if we

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From Insights, December 1975, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 5-6. Jo Ann Gregory is an elementary teacher in the Grand Forks Public School System.

wanted to have a party for our parents we would need money to pay for the flowers, food and entertainment (goods and services). We discussed various ways of getting money; such as saving allowances or asking parents for money but we decided to earn our own. We discussed different ideas but finally decided on having a store.

Once we had decided on having a store, we had to plan what we were going to sell. We finally agreed to sell school supplies such as pencils, erasers, magic markers, glue and paper. We also decided to sell buttons with the school name printed on them.

We contacted the man who made the buttons and he agreed to come to our room to tell us about them. He showed us the various sizes; told us about the cost and agreed to charge them to us interest free for one month. We agreed to buy 200 buttons to sell at our store.

Over the weekend the children were assigned to various stores to check the prices on certain items that we planned to sell. On Monday we compared prices and decided we would need about $50.00 to buy supplies. We decided to take out a bank loan.

The mother of one of the students worked at a local bank so she arranged a tour for us. She also came to school before the tour and explained to the students some of the facts of the banking business.

The tour was even more exciting than we had planned since the bank had both a revolving door and an escalator. Many of the students had used neither so I made many trips around and up and down. The personnel at the bank were great and before we left two of the students and I had signed a loan for $50.00.

We built a store of large boxes and boards, bought supplies, advertised our grand opening and posted our hours outside the door. Each student had at least one job. The jobs ranged from stock boy or girl to banker. Each morning the bookkeepers explained how much we had and how much we owed. The stockboys or girls told us how much stock was left and what we needed to buy before the next day.

We operated our store for one week. The last day we had a "going out of business" sale. We paid all our bills and had a profit of slightly over $68.00 which was more than enough to pay for our party so the children voted to use some of our profit to buy the ingredients to make homemade ice cream for the last day of school. The remainder was given to the local Red Cross.

It is difficult to evaluate the project in a formal way. I know all the children were involved with the store and were proud of it. I feel I can say that the children developed an awareness of their community; that they understood that we pay taxes for community facilities and services that we share with others; that they acquired a better understanding of their parents' occupations; that they developed an appreciation of the contribution that all workers make to our well-being. I am convinced that second-grade children can learn important economic concepts and that it can be an enjoyable experience for them and their teacher.

Career Education

Margaret Lee Harris

Last fall I began to plan some new and different ways of presenting a Career Education program to my first grade class. After being highly stimulated by a course on Career Education, I was ready to tackle some new approaches and hopefully some challenging activities for my six and seven year olds as well as for myself.

The purpose of the project was to show the children how they can become aware of themselves, of people who live and work around them, of their environment and that all work has worth and dignity.

School Helpers

Since first graders have many new situations to face those first few weeks of school, the sooner they become comfortable in their school environment the better. We began by visiting the school plant. Each afternoon for the first week we spent 30 minutes visiting various school helpers and the area of the school in which they work. We visited the:

Principal
Secretaries
Bus Driver
Physical Education Instructor
Music Teacher
Custodian
Librarian
Nurse
Cooks

From Insights, December 1975, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 6-7. Margaret Lee Harris is a teacher in the Bismarck Public School System.

Family Helpers

The people our children know the most about are their own family members. So I used this area to help the children become free to share and express themselves. We accomplished this by using stories that pointed out our respective places within the family unit. We discussed the occupations of each family member. We determined what each member did for us and what we did for the family. We used role playing situations, open-ended sentences and many art activities.

Community Helpers

Becoming aware of the many people who help us have a good community is a gigantic undertaking; we only scratched the surface. Through field trips and by bringing various people into our class room we were able to become aware of the following people:

Policemen
Firemen
Newsboy
Mailman
Milkman
Baker
Zoo Keeper
Farmer
Nurses
Doctors
Librarian
Banker

In order to learn about the community itself we built a miniature community. We started by laying out the streets, sidewalks, street lights, fire hydrants, mail boxes, fire alarms and cross walks. Then we

added houses, parks, traffic signs, speed limit signs, telephone poles and lines. As we added each new object to our community we learned who planned for it; who actually did the work and who paid for it. Most of the information was obtained from the city commission.

Self Awareness

To encourage the students to become aware of themselves and to help them establish a good self image seems very important as a foundation in choosing a career in the future. To build this foundation I felt we needed to lead the students to look at themselves as human beings and see if they really are so different because they look, feel or react certain ways to various stimuli. To accomplish this goal we followed this plan:

Physical Self
Emotional Self
Intellectual Self
Social Self
The Five Senses

Culminating Activity

Our parents were invited to come to a Career Party on May 16, in our classroom. Both parents and students came dressed to represent a career. The students planned the entire project. They made their own invitations, planned the refreshments and made up the games we played at the party. We had a very good turn out and all parents came prepared to represent a career. We felt our Career Party was a successful way to end our Career Education study for the year.

Educational Games & Simulations

Lowell Thompson

Directions:

1. If you know what educational games and simulations are, don't read Part I.
2. If you know why they are used and what students can learn from them, don't read Part II.
3. If you know where to order games and simulations, and if you know where to get more information, don't read Part III.
4. If you know 1, 2, and 3 above, don't read this paper, but instead read something you have been meaning to read or just take off the rest of the day.

Part I

Are you still there?

Educational games and simulations have been defined in a host of ways by a host of educators. Some games teach only facts and others teach only to the affective domain. Games have been praised by some and damned by others. They are effective with some learners, some not. Some teachers like them, others don't. So, what else is new?

Are there any universally "good" educational materials? Probably not. If games and simulations are not looked upon as a panacea, they will probably be useful and successful in some classrooms with some students.

But, by way of definition...in order not to burden the literature with yet another definition of games and simulations, allow me to use an already existing one provided by Clark Abt:

> ...there are two basic types:
> a) "gamey games" of the more traditional type, typified by a good bit of "hardware" (cards, gameboards, spinners, etc.) and,
> b) role-play simulations, more on the order of plays without scripts.
>
> The first type (a) lends itself to easily quantifiable subject matter, such as math, science, language. The second type (b) is particularly appropriate where qualitative factors are paramount, in social studies, for example. The first type emphasizes manipulation of concrete variables, while the second emphasizes "human factors" like: persuasion, power, communication, resource control, planning and forecasting, community decision-making, strategy trade-offs, and "psyching out" actions of others.*

Part II

People of all ages throughout the world enjoy playing games. It seems to be a universal pastime in all cultures. Games are autotelic, in that they are not necessarily played for any specific reason except for the pure intrinsic delight people get from playing them. Johana Huizinga, in his book, Homo Ludens, says that man is basically a playful

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From Insights, November 1971, Vol. IV, No. 3, pp. 2-4.

*Learning Theory and General Objectives of Teaching Games, Abt Associates, Inc., 55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138

being.

Work, however, is another thing. Some adults don't particularly like work and a lot of students think school work is really a lot to endure, and some teachers think that work is work and play is play and that kids are in school to do work, and that if kids have to play, they should play on their own time.

It turns out that it may not be all that easy to sort out work from play and play from work. Adults who really enjoy their work and find meaning in it would just as soon work as go out to "enjoy" themselves. Are they doing work, then, or playing? Are students who are learning through educational games and simulations playing or doing school work?

I would take the position that, especially for young people, it is extremely difficult to separate play and work. Furthermore, to attempt to sort out play from work in schools is self-defeating. Play is a natural part of man's existence, and to ask students to leave the "play" part of their existence at the entrance of the school building is just about as unreasonable as asking them to leave their right arm at the door.

This is not to say that teachers should condone "playing around" or engaging in disruptive or destructive behavior. That kind of activity is not play but simply anti-social behavior.

There is much talk in educational circles about the need for schools to become more conscious of the affective domain in the learning of children. Educational critics point out that most of what goes on in the schools is "fact-oriented." We teach dates, places, imports, exports and other educational trivia, but we don't do a very good job of teaching attitudes and values, commitment to democratic society, openness to other peoples, cultures and ideas, or empathy for other life styles.

Simulation has great potential for bridging the gap between a fact-oriented curriculum and an affective-oriented curriculum. A teacher and class could spend a lot of time talking about the problems of blacks. Together they could gather a lot of data and get a lot of facts that would help them understand some of the problems of minority groups in America. This would be a good activity for a class to do-but if prejudice existed in the class before, would the activity help create more tolerance toward minority groups?

If these same students were to play several sessions of the game simulation, Blacks and Whites, there is some reason to believe that many of their attitudes would be changed significantly. Blacks and Whites attempts to simulate a social system or community consisting of black and white Americans. Players in the game play either certain black roles or certain white roles and encounter situations that parallel the conflicts that exist in real life.

A black player playing a white, or a white player playing a black, usually gains some insight into the way others feel about certain issues and understands to some extent why they feel that way. In addition, the players develop some empathy for the others' positions. This is the stuff of social studies. We simply have to develop in students more empathy, more understanding, more tolerance for other people and other positions.

There are many examples of simulations which have a potential to develop this kind of affective awareness. A few of the better simulations used by this writer include: The Cities Game, The Great Plains Game, Star Power, and The Supermarket Game.

Part III

Simulations and games are a relatively new educational strategy, and comprehensive bibliographies do not exist. What follows is an attempt to

list some of the sources known to this writer.

1. The Guide to Simulation Games for Education and Training by David W. Zuckerman and Robert Horn. Available from Information Resources Inc., 1675 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138. 329 pages. This guide lists games in the areas of business, politics, economics, ecology, education, geography, history, psychology, sociology, social studies, reading and math. It also gives information regarding age level, number of players needed, and playing times.

2. Directory of Educational Simulations, Learning Games and Didactic Units, by Klietch, Wiegman and Powell. Available from Instructional Simulations Inc., Box 212, Newport, Minn. 55055. This guide lists games in many areas, including social studies, and also has a brief statement on game theory. It also has information on playing times, grade levels, etc.

3. Social Studies School Service, 1971 Catalog. Available from Social Studies School Service, 10,000 Culver Blvd., Culver, Calif. 90230. 130 pages full of materials for social studies, including a description, price, etc., for some 30 simulations and games.

After November 7? Politics in the Classroom

Kathy Hougue, Karla Krank and Michael Patton

National elections seem to be perfect events for classroom social studies projects. In November, before the Presidential election, North Dakota schools blossomed with bulletin boards showing election activities, debates, news reports and mock-elections. Now the national elections have passed. Is there a place for politics in the classroom after November 7?

For teachers interested in more open learning environments we believe the answer is a definite "Yes!" There is a great deal of talk about "learning by doing," critical thinking, learning how to learn and personal responsibility for decision-making. But most time spent on social studies projects about politics is still devoted to detail, an emphasis on facts and the study of issues far removed from the immediate lives of students.

The reason most teachers don't do more with politics after national elections is that they have a narrow view of what politics means. In an open learning environment, politics is not the study of candidates, issues, election laws and citizenship. Politics is what happens every time a decision is made in the classroom. In this context, learning about politics means learning about how we make decisions, studying student interaction, devising planning strategies and fostering both the values and practices of classroom democracy.

The creation of this kind of learning environment demands more than a once-a-week current events lesson. Meaningful political learning requires an on-going program based on true-life situations of the political process. When children experience the political process firsthand by actually making decisions, they will learn something different than the student who passively studies about how other people make decisions.

'Contemporary' Ideas

We set out to discover what kinds of things teachers are doing in their classrooms to teach politics. In addition to our own observations, we searched through the last several years' issues of two leading magazines for teachers. Some of the ideas we felt were quite creative; others showed potential; and some were more useful for studying the political values of contemporary education than for the learning they would stimulate.

These are the ideas we found:

Study the family unit in lower grades to illustrate the need for social groups and to allow children to see the need for some person to make decisions.

Conduct visits to the mayor's office, park board, school board and to other elected or appointed bodies and officials.

From Insights, December 1972, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 4-6. Kathy Hougue and Karla Krank were CTL undergraduate students and Michael Patton was a University of Wisconsin doctoral student doing dissertation research through CTL at the time this article was written.

Stage dramatic activities such as skits, satires, pageants, plays and puppet shows on political themes.

Do a mock television show on a political topic after looking at magazines, newspapers and other media.

One sixth grade class in Orchard Park, NY, decided to draw up a "Human Rights for Our World's Children." It included a vast range of ideas from specific to general:

...Children of all races should have equal rights.
...All children should have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.
...All children have the right to help solve problems.
...All children have the right to read books of their choice.
...etc.

Discuss concepts related to citizenship. This could lead to a discussion of diverse family origins with children trying to explain why their ancestors immigrated to the United States. Include discussions, reports and poems on concepts like freedom, responsibility, service, honesty, patriotism, etc.

Children can suggest character traits which they believe are good. This could lead to a discussion of the qualifications necessary for candidates seeking political office and the qualities of good voters.

Study and then make political cartoons.

Make bulletin board displays to demonstrate in a positive way the necessity of values which take others into consideration. An example of such a bulletin board is the following: "First plant four rows of peas--perseverance, promptness, preparation and politeness. Then plant three rows of squash--squash gossip, squash criticism and squash indifference."

Make a classroom "political reference book" consisting of the endless types of information we need to know. Include the Pledge of Allegiance, privileges guaranteed by the Constitution, the Preamble, duties of the three branches of government, etc.

Popular music can be used in the classroom for understanding current political values and conflicts. Play and discuss songs like: "People Got to be Free," the Byrds; "Freedom," Richie Havens; "Find the Cost of Freedom," Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young; "I am Woman," "Hellen Reddy."

Have the children work out the history of the local area, its origin, its livelihood, political leaders, major political events and present governing structure. Arrange for local leaders and senior citizens to talk with the students.

Write and conduct a political poll. Any number of interesting questions can be included, based on the interests of the children. Use graphs, tables, fractions, percentages and time-lines to represent the results. This integrates math and social studies activities.

Simulation games have been developed for experiencing the political process in the classroom. One such game, developed by political sociologist James Coleman, is called Democracy--the Workings of the Legislative Process. (It is available from Western Publishing Co., New York. A catalog of games can be obtained from Educational Games Co., Box 363, Peekskill, NY 10566.)[1]

Another Concern

These ideas are all things to do in the classroom. Many of them reflect a concern with making social studies more interesting, more engaging and/or more contemporary. However, some of these ideas, it seems to us, represent traditional education at its

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[1]The magazines we reviewed were Instructor and Grade Teacher.

worst--value indoctrination instead of value clarification.

But none of these ideas comes to grips with the basic political process in the classroom. The social studies curriculum can be made more interesting and more contemporary. American social and political institutions can be dealt with critically. But, "at the same time, schools remain fundamentally authoritarian institutions." Vito Perrone [Dean of the Center for Teaching and Learning] and Lowell Thompson [CTL instructor] made that observation in an article last spring. They went on to say:

> It seems abundantly clear that authoritarian institutions do not encourage initiative and responsibility. Sensitivity and a belief in the dignity of the individual are not taught in settings where children are not treated with dignity... Personal value systems are not extended in settings where children do not confront situations that require judgments and decisions, where a variety of learning options are not available.[1]

[This same article contains a large number of ideas about how to develop and extend an open social studies program.]

This quotation suggests a need for something more than academic-type political activities in classrooms. Social studies in general, and politics in particular, is concerned with the relationships between people. "Politics" cannot be taught in a class held for one hour every day. By "politics" we don't mean learning about the science of government. We mean children living and working together democratically.

What does this mean in terms of what actually goes on in the classroom? We suggest the establishment of a classroom governmental system. The teacher is a participant, a guide and also an active learner. The children live their own governmental system. They analyze and deal with problems that arise. They work in committees. They learn about group process.

Many teachers have encouraged class elections as an experience in democracy. But class elections are of very little use if they are an end in themselves. Too many times students are popularly elected with no specific tasks to carry out once they are chosen.

The creation of a viable class government and/or class committees means that students grapple with real decisions. Students can organize activities, determine ground rules, work out codes of behavior and deal with disruptions. The classroom government can plan field trips, sponsor classroom visitors and speakers and establish "diplomatic relations" with other classrooms or other schools.

Beyond Election Time

All three of us were active in the November election campaign. During that time we talked with teachers and visited classrooms where political themes were used. The concern that led to this article came from our observations that politics is treated in a very narrow way in most classrooms. We believe, as we have stated throughout this article, that politics should be a conscious part of the total, on-going classroom experience. The learning that takes place through a meaningful classroom political process can provide children with both the cognitive knowledge and personal skills that will make them active citizens as well as active persons.

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[1]Vito Perrone and Lowell Thompson, "Social Studies in the Open Classroom." Social Education, April 1972.

Solving Moral Dilemmas

Lowell Thompson

Working with moral dilemmas in elementary classrooms is one of the most significant and exciting educational movements of the decade. One teacher commented, "I can't shut them up. They would discuss moral dilemmas all afternoon if I would let them. It's fantastic!" Her enthusiasm for moral education is shared by many in the field of education. A recent issue of Social Education (January, 1975) devoted six major articles to the theme "Moral Education: Learning to Weigh Human Values." Several major publishing companies are developing curriculum materials devoted to Moral Education and at least one publishing company (Holt) has materials in print. The Pennsylvanian Council for the Social Studies has endorsed the movement and has begun to provide curriculum materials for their teachers. Several major universities have also developed training programs for teachers interested in Moral Education.

What accounts for this very dynamic movement? There are probably a number of reasons but first and foremost it's just fun to try to solve moral dilemmas. Students of all ages, and teachers too, just can't resist attempting to solve a problem that has no "right" solution and the dilemmas provide literally hours of very stimulating, very thought-provoking discussions.

There are, of course, other more profound reasons for the rapid growth of moral education. The "times" appear to be right. There is a new morality emerging and it is not a morality of the 60's which encouraged everybody to "do their own thing." It is instead, a morality that will not accept even the President acting outside the law; a morality committed to adequate medical care as a basic human right; a morality dedicated to the spirit of the law as opposed to a legalistic interpretation of the "letter of the law." In short, a morality of equality and justice and a belief in the dignity of the human experience.

A major factor in the renewed interest in moral education is the work of Professor Lawrence Kohlberg at Harvard University. Dr. Kohlberg has developed a theory of cognitive moral development based upon his research with a group of 75 American males who were interviewed every three years between adolescence and adulthood. Kohlberg's theory of cognitive moral development has been substantiated in several other studies and is becoming more widely accepted. An excellent summary of Kohlberg's theory of cognitive development can be found in the May, 1973 issue of Social Education (see bibliography at the end of this article) but the following dilemma will serve to illustrate Kohlberg's theory.

Heinz's wife was dying from a strange form of cancer. There was a druggist in the village who had made a drug that could save her, but he was selling the drug for $2,000, although it cost him only $200 to make it. Heinz went to all his friends and tried to borrow the money but he could only raise $1,000. So he went to the druggist and said, "Could I have the

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drug today? I'll pay you later." The druggist said, "No, I invented the drug and I'll charge what I want." Heinz broke into the drugstore and stole the drug. Was he right or wrong to do it? Why?

The rational provided for a particular action, according to Kohlberg, might fall into one of the following three levels or six stages:

Preconventional level
- Stage one (punishment obedience stage) "It's wrong to steal. A person will be punished or sent to jail for stealing."
- Stage two (personal interest stage) "He should have stolen the drug. He needs his wife to help him raise their family and he might get off with a light sentence."

Conventional level
- Stage three (good person stage) "He shouldn't steal it because people will think he is a bad man for stealing." or "He should steal it because people would think he was a bad man for letting his wife die."
- Stage four (law and order stage) "It's against the law to steal. What would happen if everyone just broke the law anytime they wanted."

Post Conventional level
- Stage five (social responsibility stage) "He should steal it and hope that society will recognize the injustice of sending him to prison for his act."
- Stage six (personal conscience stage) "He should steal it because of the value and dignity of human life. He should also make the theft known and work to solve the injustice of laws which allow one man to charge what the traffic will bear for a life-saving drug."

Professor Kohlberg believes that moral development occurs invariantly from stage one to stage two to stage three, etc. A person's development might stop at any one of these stages but he must go through stage one to get to stage two and he must go through stage two to stage three. Further, the degree to which he develops morally is a function of his cognitive development and the quality of his experiences. There is an excellent chance his development will stop at stage two.

The educational implications inherent in moral education seem clear. First of all, a school that does not provide curriculum experiences for children to develop morally as well as intellectually are neglecting, perhaps, the most important part of a student's education. Secondly, schools that function totally on level one ("If you don't stop that you are going to have to stay in at recess time") or level two ("I have a treat for everyone who does well in spelling today") or level three ("Nice girls don't do that") deprive students of an opportunity to function at higher levels.

In summary, the theory and philosophy of cognitive moral development is extremely powerful. The rational for including moral education in the curriculum seems convincing. Last, but not least, it is a favorite activity of the students and teachers who are beginning to work with moral dilemmas.

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The Human Development Program — An Effective Education Activity

An Interview by Wayne Kuklinski with Darya Lauretig

Wayne Kuklinski, an undergraduate student in CTL was interested in learning about the Human Development Program. The following is an interview in which he questions Darya Lauretig, a former Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Human Relations Cluster, who offered classes in the Human Development Program:

Wayne: "I've recently heard about the Human Development Program that was designed for use in schools and was wondering if you could tell me a little about the program."

Darya: "Sure. There's an awful lot that I could tell you though. Are there some specific questions you have about the program?

Wayne: "Well, I understand that it's an affective education program; that it focuses more on feelings than the cognitive aspect of education. Is that right?"

Darya: "Yes, that's true. I think you can't really separate the two, the cognitive and affective, but I guess if I had to categorize it as either one or the other I would place it in the affective domain."

Wayne: "Well, how does the program work? Is it just getting together to talk about feelings?"

Darya: "That's the misunderstanding that a lot of people have. It's not just getting together to talk about feelings. Maybe I'll start from the very beginning and things might become clearer to you that way. The HDP is an affective education program originally designed for use in the classroom with students of all ages. A group of students consisting of between eight and twelve participants get together in a circle (called the "Magic Circle") and discuss their feelings and experiences in relation to particular topics. They don't just get together to talk about any feelings they have. There is a sequence of topics that are introduced to the students from day to day. The topics at the beginning of the program are fairly simple - such as "Something That Made Me Feel Good" and then progressively become more complex such as "Something That Gave Me a Mixed Feeling, a Good and Bad Feeling at the Same Time."

Wayne: "So it is a structured group discussion with a sequence of topics."

Darya: "Yes."

Wayne: "It seems from what you said a sequence would be needed - that it might be too difficult to discuss topics which appear in the latter part of the program guides if you hadn't already covered the ground of the first part of the program."

Darya: "Right."

Wayne: "But why was the need felt to design a special structured program for the classroom?"

Darya: "I think by telling you about the history of the program I'll answer your question. The two people

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who designed the program, Harold Bessell and Uvaldo Palomores, had found through their studies that the majority of people who had a need to see psychologists and psychiatrists were middle-aged, middle-class, married and educated people. They found that these people were able to get along fairly well in their lives, but that they were basically discontented with their lives and had a pessimistic view of life. They found further that this disappointment with their lives was in large part due to their inability to be personally effective with people and a lack of understanding about the dynamics of human relationships. Based on this information gathered, they decided to design a preventative program for use in schools, since people leaving the schools seemed to come away from them without having developed some personal effectiveness. They developed three main areas that the program would focus around: Awareness, Mastery and Social Interaction. It was their belief, supported by the personality-development theories of Karen Horney, that structuring a program to help people become more aware of their feelings, thoughts and actions (Awareness); realize their abilities and learn how to use them (Mastery) and gain an understanding of Human Relationships (Social Interaction), would better enable them to cope with life's emotional experiences. It is through the topics I mentioned earlier that these goals are partially if not fully realized."

Wayne: "So it's through the discussions and the sharing of experiences and feelings that growth is fostered in those three areas."

Darya: "Yes."

Wayne: "That's very interesting. It seems that the program would be important for good mental health just as food and exercise is important for good physical health."

Darya: "Exactly."

Wayne: "The more I think of my own experiences though the more I think that it might have been hard to talk about feelings like that. We never had group discussions such as the one you're describing when I was in school. I would imagine that there would be students who wouldn't say anything. What do you do then?"

Darya: "If students don't want to participate that's all right. Oftentimes they feel shy or uncomfortable and just listen. It's been many people's experiences though that as the group begins to meet more often the trust level of the group develops and those students begin to enter into the discussion on their own. But we don't push them at all."

Wayne: "How about the teacher's role in the group?"

Darya: "The teacher facilitates the group at least until the students are able to take more responsibility for running the group. She tries to foster interaction between teacher and student, and student and student. It's also important that she participate and share her feelings. Probably her most important role though is being a nonjudgmental listener--accepting the students' feelings in all cases. This is a very necessary part of the program if the program is to have a chance of succeeding at all. The program is based on the assumption that feelings are real and that social-emotional growth is fostered through the acceptance of those feelings."

Wayne: "It seems that a teacher wanting to use this program would need to have a strong belief in it in order for it to be successful?

Darya: "For sure."

Wayne: "What about implementing it into the school day?"

Darya: "Many teachers treat this program like any other program. They set aside a time of the day to be "Magic Circle" time. The students

know about that time and come together just like any other activity."

Wayne: How about schools that are using the program. Are there many?"

Darya: Yes, there are. I don't know figures off hand, but I remember reading in the theory manual a few years ago that over thirty-thousand professionals and paraprofessionals had been trained in the use of the program so you can imagine the number of places where circles are going on right now."

Wayne: You said trained. I would assume there are training sessions for those interested in learning about the program?"

Darya: "Yes. There are workshops about the Human Development Program going on all the time around the country. You can receive information about them by writing to The Institute for Personal Effectiveness in Children located in California."

The following are excerpts from a newsletter recently distributed by Mary Ellen Youngs, a Human Development Program Consultant in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. She is presently training teachers in the use of the program and is helping them implement it in the school system there. The excerpts are verbatim comments from teachers, parents and children which capture their feelings about the program so far.

From Northwood School

"I feel it's great. I wish we could have it more often."

"I think Magic Circle is fun. You don't have to do it if you don't want to."

"I think it's really great because you get to know other people better because they tell you what's happened to them in the past and present. And you get to tell things that you always wanted to tell but never had a real chance to."

From Noble School

Several staff members are involved in an HDP in-service. The following letter is from a parent of a student who is participating in a Human Development Program Circle in her classroom.

"Dear Ms._____.

Just a short note to let you know how impressed my husband and I are with the 'talk groups' you are having in your classroom.

My daughter has been able to verbalize with much more ease 'painful' feelings as well as happy, since your 'talk groups' started. We were especially aware of this, since she has been exposed to trauma in regard to a major illness and its aftermath two years ago, when I had surgery.

Since I work in the field of mental health, I realize how necessary it is for children to allow themselves to verbalize instead of 'bottling up' emotion. Again, our thanks for the time and energy you are spending to make these 'talk groups' a meaningful experience for the children in your classroom.

Sincerely,"

From Roxboro Junior

These are comments from students who have just begun to use the HDP.

"I really felt that if I said anything, other of the people would think I was kind of "weird." (I learned) that I might have been able to say something because others did."

"It would relieve a lot of frustration if you had these more often."

"I had a feeling of belonging. I was in touch with other people's feelings . . . (learned that) other people have many of the same feelings and hobbies as I do."

Other Comments from Northwood School

Would you believe: A group of third graders preferred to stay in their "talking circle" when physical education time came around.

A fourth grade student said she'd never stay home on Tuesday because that's when HDP time is.

A mother came in to say how great HDP is for her daughter, who talked to her for 45 minutes about it.

Information about Magic Circle may be obtained from:

Human Development Training Institute
7574 University Avenue
La Meda, California 92041

Also available as part of the Informal Education series:

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